SERMONS

ON THE

PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES of CHRISTIANITY.

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Tranſlated from the original FRENCH of

CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC
GORDON SQ

The late Rev^d. JAMES SAURIN,

Paſtor of the French Church at the Hague.

VOLUME III.

ON THE

PRINCIPAL DOCTRINES of CHRISTIANITY.

Peace be multiplied unto you through the RIGHTEOUSNESS *of God, and our* SAVIOUR *Jeſus Chriſt.* S. PETER.

CAMBRIDGE,

Printed for the TRANSLATOR by FLETCHER & HODSON.

MDCC LXXVII.

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M,DCC,LXXIII.

THE PREFACE.

THREE times have I taken pen in hand to account to my ſubſcribers in a preface for my choice of the ſermons, that compoſe this volume: but one thought hath as often confuſed me at the outſet, and obliged me to lay it aſide. I am ſtruck with an idea of the different degrees of labour neceſſary to two men, one of whom ſhould conceive the project of diſuniting Chriſtians, and the other that of cementing them together in mutual love. The firſt need not trouble himſelf with ſtudy, examination, and argument; he would not be obliged either to diveſt himſelf of his own prepoſſeſſions, or to expoſe thoſe of others; he need not ſit whole nights and days either to examine coolly his own theſes, or impartially to weigh thoſe of his opponents; let him only take popular prejudices, cover them with the ſacred ſtyle of ſcripture, or conceal them under the impenetrable jargon of the ſchools; let him animate them with party ſpirit, call it religious zeal, and denounce judgments on all, who do not believe the whole to be eſſential to ſalvation; and the work will be done. Such a man, methinks, reſembles a light-heeled enemy tripping over a ſpacious field, and ſcattering as he goes the ſeeds of an endleſs number of weeds: while the man, who adopts a contrary plan, muſt be forced, like the patient prying weeder, to ſtoop and toil ſtep by ſtep, day after day, feeling many a pain, and fetching many a ſigh, to pull the noxious produce up.

According to my firſt propoſal, this volume ought to conſiſt of ſermons on *the doctrines of chriſtianity*. My intimate friends, who firſt encouraged, and ſubſcribed for this tranſlation, thoroughly underſtood me: but I might have foreſeen, that their partiality would procure other purchaſers, unacquainted with my notions of men and things, and who probably might expect to find each his own ſyſtem of religion in a volume of ſermons on the doctrines of our common Lord. I am neceſſitated therefore to explain myſelf, and to beſpeak a candid attention, while I endeavour to do ſo.

Very early in life I was prepoſſeſſed in favour of the following poſitions.—Chriſtianity is a religion of divine original—a religion of divine original muſt needs be a perfect religion, and anſwer all the ends, for which it was revealed, without human additions. —The chriſtian religion hath undergone conſiderable alterations ſince the times of Jeſus Chriſt, and his apoſtles, and yet *Jeſus* Chriſt was then accounted *the finiſher*, as well as *the author of faith*.—The doctrines of revelation, as they lie in the inſpired writings, differ very much from the ſame doctrines, as they lie in creeds of human compoſition.—The moral precepts, the poſitive inſtitutes, and the religious affections, which conſtitute the devotion of moſt modern chriſtians, form a melancholy contraſt to thoſe, which are deſcribed by the guides, whom they profeſs to follow.—The light of nature, and that of revelation; the operations of right reaſon, the ſpirit of the firſt, and the influence of the holy Ghoſt, the ſoul of the laſt; both proceeding from the ſame uniform ſupreme Being, cannot be ſuppoſed to be deſtructive of each other, or, even in the leaſt degree, to claſh together.—The fineſt idea, that can be formed of the ſupreme Being, is that of an infinite intelligence always in harmony with itſelf; and, accordingly, the beſt way of proving the truth of revelation is that of ſhewing the analogy of the plan of redemption to that of

Heb. xii. 2.

of creation and providence.—Simplicity and majeſty characterize both nature and ſcripture: ſimplicity reduces thoſe benefits, which are eſſential to the real happineſs of man, to the ſize of all mankind; majeſty makes a rich proviſion for the employment and ſuper-added felicity of a few ſuperior geniuſſes, who firſt improve themſelves, and then felicitate their inferior brethren, by ſimplifying their own ideas, by refining and elevating thoſe of their fellow-creatures, by ſo eſtabliſhing a ſocial intercourſe, conſolidating fraternal love, and along with it all the reciprocal ties, that unite mankind.—Men's ideas of objects eſſential to their happineſs are neither ſo diſſimilar, nor ſo numerous, as inattentive ſpectators are apt to ſuppoſe.—Variety of ſentiment, which is the life of ſociety, cannot be deſtructive of real religion.—Mere mental errors, if they be not entirely innocent in the account of the ſupreme Governor of mankind, cannot be, however, objects of blame and puniſhment among men.—Chriſtianity could never be intended to deſtroy the juſt natural rights, or even to diminiſh the natural privileges of mankind.—That religion, which allows the juſt claims, and ſecures the ſocial happineſs of all mankind, muſt needs be a better religion than that, which provides for only a part at the expence of the reſt.—God is more glorified by the good actions of his creatures expreſſive of homage to him, and productive of univerſal, ſocial good, than he is by uncertain conjectures, or even accurate notions, which originate in ſelf-poſſeſſion and terminate in ſocial diſunion.—How clear ſoever all theſe maxims may be, a certain degree of ambition or avarice, ignorance or malice, preſumption or diffidence, or any other irregular paſſion, will render a man blind to the cleareſt demonſtration, and inſenſible to the moſt rational and affecting perſuaſion. Theſe poſitions, mere opinions and prepoſſeſſions before examination, became demonſtrative truths after a courſe of diligent ſearch; and

theſe general principles have operated in the choice of the ſermons, which compoſe this volume of the principal doctrines of chriſtianity.

But, previous to all enquiries concerning the doctrines of chriſtianity, it is abſolutely neceſſary to eſtabliſh that of CHRISTIAN LIBERTY; for, ſay we what we will, if this preliminary doctrine of right be diſallowed, voluntary piety is the dream of an enthuſiaſt; the oracles of God in the chriſtian world, like thoſe of the Sybils in pagan Rome, are ſounds convertible to ſenatorial ſenſe; and the whole chriſtian miſſion, from the firſt prophet down to the laſt miniſter, is one long muſter-roll of ſtateſmen's tools, a diſgrace to their ſpecies, a contradiction to their profeſſion, a diſhonour to their God!

Chriſtian liberty in Italy is liberty to be a Roman catholic, that is, liberty to believe what the biſhop of Rome affirms to be true, and liberty to perform what he commands to be done. Chriſtian liberty in ſome reformed churches is liberty to renounce what the reformers renounced, to believe what they affirmed, and to practiſe what they required. But we, who *have not ſo learned Chriſt*, define chriſtian liberty otherwiſe; and, if we be aſked, What is chriſtian liberty? we anſwer, It is liberty to be a chriſtian. One part of chriſtianity conſiſts of propoſitions to be believed. Liberty to be a chriſtian believer is liberty to examine theſe propoſitions, to form a judgment of them, and to come to a ſelf-determination, according to our own beſt abilities. Another part of chriſtianity conſiſts of duties to be performed. Liberty to be a practical chriſtian is liberty to perform theſe duties, either as they regard God, our neighbour, or ourſelves. Liberty to be a chriſtian implies liberty not to be a chriſtian, as liberty to examine a propoſition implies liberty to reject the arguments brought to ſupport it, if they appear inconcluſive, as well as liberty to admit them, if they appear demonſtrative. To pretend

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to examine chriſtianity, before we have eſtabliſhed our right to do ſo, is to pretend to cultivate an eſtate, before we have made out our title to it.

The object of chriſtian liberty, that, with which a man, who would examine chriſtianity, has to do, is a ſyſtem of chriſtian doctrine: but, having eſtabliſhed the doctrine of right, before we proceed to exerciſe this right by examining the religion propoſed to mankind by Jeſus Chriſt, it is abſolutely neceſſary to enquire what we ought, on ſound principles of juſt and fair reaſoning, to expect to find in it. I know ſome truths without revelation. I have a full demonſtration in nature, that there is one God—that it is impoſſible there ſhould be more than one—that he is an intelligent ſpirit—and that he is a wiſe and bountiful being. Should any religion, which pretends to be divine, affirm, there is a plurality of gods—God is not an intelligent ſpirit—God is an unwiſe and an unkind being—I ſhould have a right to reject this pretended revelation. Indeed, ſhould a revealed religion allow my demonſtrations, and afterwards explain them in a manner quite ſubverſive of my former explications of them; ſhould it affirm, God is, as you ſay, a wiſe and bountiful being: but he diſplays his wiſdom and goodneſs not in governing his intelligent creatures as you have imagined; ſuch a moral government, I will prove to you, would ſhew a defect of wiſdom and goodneſs: but he diſplays the ſupreme perfection of both by providing for ſuch and ſuch intereſts, and by beſtowing ſuch and ſuch benefits, as have either eſcaped your notice, or were beyond your comprehenſion. In this caſe, I ought not to reject revelation, for, although I can demonſtrate without inſpiration the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, yet I cannot pretend by the light of nature to know all the directions, and to aſcertain all the limits of theſe perfections.

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Lay chriſtianity before me who will, I expect to find three things in it, which I call analogy, proportion, and perfection. Each of theſe articles opens a wide field of not incurious ſpeculation, and each fully explained and applied would ſerve to guide any man in his choice of a religion, yea in his choice of a party among the various diviſions of chriſtians: but alas! we are not employed now a-days in examining and chooſing religious principles for ourſelves, but in ſubſcribing, and defending thoſe of our anceſtors! A few hints then ſhall ſerve.

By *analogy* I mean reſemblance, and, when I ſay a revealed religion muſt bring along with it analogical evidence, I mean, it muſt reſemble the juſt dictates of nature. The reaſon is plain. The ſame ſupreme Being is the author of both. The God of nature has formed man for obſerving objects, comparing them together, laying down principles, inferring conſequences, reaſoning and ſelf-determining; he has not only empowered all mankind to exerciſe theſe abilities, but he has even conſtrained them by a neceſſity of nature to do ſo; he has not only rendered it impoſſible for men to excel without this exerciſe, but he has even rendered it impoſſible for them to exiſt ſafely in ſociety without it. In a word, the God of nature has made man in his own image, a ſelf-determining being, and, to ſay nothing of the nature of virtue, he has rendered free conſent eſſential to every man's felicity and peace. With his own conſent ſubjection makes him happy; without it dominion over the univerſe would make him miſerable.

The religion of nature, (I mean by this expreſſion, here, the objects, which diſplay the nature of the deity, and thereby diſcover the obligations of mankind.) is in perfect harmony with the natural conſtitution of man. All natural objects offer evidence to all: but force it on none. A man may examine it, and he may not examine it: he may admit it, and he may reject it: and, if his rejection of the evidence of natural religion be not expreſſed in ſuch overt acts as are injurious to the peace

peace of civil ſociety, no man is empowered to force him, or to puniſh him; the ſupreme moral Governor of the world himſelf does not diſtinguiſh him here by any exterior puniſhments; at moſt he expreſſes his diſpleaſure by marks attached to the perſon of the culprit, and concealed from all the reſt of his fellow-creatures; and the glory of civil ſociety is not to encroach on the moral government of God.

Chriſtianity comes, pretends to come from the God of nature; I look for analogy, and I find it: but I find it in the holy ſcriptures, the firſt teachers, and the primitive churches. In all theſe, I am conſidered as a rational creature, objects are propoſed, evidence is offered; if I admit it, I am not entitled thereby to any temporal emoluments; if I refuſe it, I am not ſubjected to any temporal puniſhments: the whole is an affair of conſcience, and lies between each individual and his God. I chooſe to be a chriſtian on this very account. This freedom, which I call a perfection of my nature, this ſelf-determination, the dignity of my ſpecies, the eſſence of my natural virtue; this I do not forfeit by becoming a chriſtian, this I retain, explained, confirmed, directed, aſſiſted by the regal grant of the Son of God. Thus the prerogatives of Chriſt, the laws of his religion, and the natural rights of mankind being analogous, evidence ariſes of the divinity of the religion of Jeſus.

I believe, it would be very eaſy to prove, that the chriſtianity of the church of Rome, and that of every other eſtabliſhment, becauſe they are eſtabliſhments, are totally deſtitute of this analogy. The religion of nature is not capable of eſtabliſhment, the religion of Jeſus Chriſt is not capable of eſtabliſhment: if the religion of any church be capable of eſtabliſhment, it is not analogous to that of Scripture, or that of nature. A very ſimple example may explain our meaning. Natural religion requires a man to pay a mental homage to the deity, to venerate his perfections, by adoring and confiding in them. By what poſſible means can

theſe pious operations of the mind be eſtabliſhed? could they be forced, their nature would be deſtroyed, and they would ceaſe to be piety, which is an exerciſe of judgment and will. Revealed religion requires man to pay a mental homage to the deity through Jeſus Chriſt, to venerate his perfections by adoring and confiding in them as chriſtianity directs; by repentance, by faith, by hope, and ſo on. How is it poſſible to eſtabliſh thoſe ſpiritual acts? A human eſtabliſhment requires man to pay this chriſtian mental homage to the deity by performing ſome external ceremony, ſuppoſe bowing to the eaſt. The ceremony, we grant, may be eſtabliſhed: but, the voluntary exerciſe of the ſoul in the performance, which is eſſential to the chriſtianity of the action, who in the world can eſtabliſh this? If the religion of Jeſus be conſidered as conſiſting of external rites and internal diſpoſitions, the former may be eſtabliſhed: but, be it remembered, the eſtabliſhment of the exterior not only does not eſtabliſh the interior, but the deſtruction of the laſt is previouſly eſſential to the eſtabliſhment of the firſt.

No religion can be eſtabliſhed without penal ſanctions, and all penal ſanctions in caſes of religion are perſecutions. Before a man can perſecute, he muſt renounce the generous tolerant diſpoſitions of a chriſtian. No religion can be eſtabliſhed without human creeds; and ſubſcription to all human creeds implies two diſpoſitions contrary to true religion, and both expreſsly forbidden by the author of it. Theſe two diſpoſitions are, love of dominion over conſcience in the impoſer, and an abject preference of ſlavery in the ſubſcriber. The firſt uſurps the rights of Chriſt; the laſt ſwears allegiance to a pretender. The firſt domineers, and gives laws like a tyrant; the laſt truckles like a vaſſal. The firſt aſſumes a dominion incompatible with his frailty, impoſſible even to his dignity, yea denied to the dignity of angels; the laſt yields a low ſubmiſſion, inconſiſtent with his own dignity, and ruinous to that very religion, which he pretends by this

this mean to ſupport. Jeſus Chriſt does not require, he does not allow, yea he expreſsly forbids both theſe diſpoſitions, well knowing, that an allowance of theſe would be a ſuppreſſion of the fineſt diſpoſitions of the human ſoul, and a degrading of revelation beneath the religion of nature. If human inventions have formerly ſecularized chriſtianity, and rendered ſuch bad diſpoſitions neceſſary in times of ignorance, they ought to be exploded now, as all chriſtians now allow this theory—The Son of God did not come to redeem one part of mankind to ſerve the ſecular views, and unworthy paſſions of the other: but he obtained freedom for both, that both *might ſerve him without fear in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of their lives.* When churches reduce this theory to practice, they realize in actual life what otherwiſe makes only a fine idea decyphered in books, and by ſo doing they adorn their chriſtianity with the glorious evidence of analogy.

Suppoſe the God of nature ſhould think proper to reveal a ſimple ſyſtem of aſtronomy, and to require all mankind to examine and believe this revelation on pain of his diſpleaſure. Suppoſe one civil government, having examined this revelation, and explained the ſenſe, in which they underſtood it, ſhould endeavour to eſtabliſh their explication by temporal rewards and puniſhments. Suppoſe they ſhould require all their ſubjects to carry their infants in their arms to a publick ſchool, to anſwer certain aſtronomical interrogations, to be put by a profeſſor of aſtronomy; as, in general, Wilt thou, Infant of eight days old! Wilt thou be an aſtronomer? Doſt thou renounce all erroneous ſyſtems of aſtronomy? In particular, doſt thou admit the true Copernican ſyſtem? Doſt thou believe the revealed explication of this ſyſtem? And doſt thou alſo believe that explication of this revelation, which certain of our own predeceſſors in the profeſſion believed, which explication the government has adopted, and which we, your maſters, and parents, in due obedience, re-

ceive? Suppoſe a proxy required to anſwer for this infant; All this, I, proxy for this child, do ſtedfaſtly believe; and ſuppoſe from this hour the child became a reputed aſtronomer. Suppoſe yet farther, this child ſhould grow to manhood, and in junior life ſhould be preſſed, on account of the obligation contracted in his infant ſtate, to ſubſcribe a certain paper called an aſtronomical creed, containing mathematical definitions, aſtronomical propoſitions, and ſo on, and ſhould be required for certain rewards to examine and approve, teach and defend this creed, and no other, without incurring the penalty of expulſion from all public ſchools, a deprivation of all honours, which he might be ſuppoſed on other accounts to merit, an excluſion from all offices of truſt, credit, and profit, in ſome caſes a loſs of property, in others impriſonment, in others death. In this ſuppoſed caſe, I aſk, would not the eſtabliſhment of this ſyſtem be an open violation of the doctrine of analogy, and ſhould I not have a right to reaſon thus? The revelation itſelf is infallible, and the author of it has given it me to examine: but the eſtabliſhment of a given meaning of it renders examination needleſs, and perhaps dangerous. The God of nature has given me eyes, inſtruments, powers, and inclinations to uſe them; eyes, faculties, and diſpoſitions as good as thoſe of my anceſtors, and inſtruments better: but all theſe advantages, which may be beneficial to me, if they confirm the truth of the explication, may be fatal to me, if they lag behind, or ken beyond the bound of the creed. Nature ſays, a conſtellation is a collection of ſtars, which in the heaven appear near to one another. This is a plain ſimple truth, I open my eyes, and admit the evidence. Revelation ſays, each fixt ſtar is a ſun, the centre of a ſyſtem, conſiſting of planets inhabited by intelligent beings, who poſſeſs one ſenſe and two faculties more than the inhabitants of this globe, and who worſhip the moſt high God in

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ſpirit and in truth. I cannot comprehend this whole propoſition: but there is nothing in it contrary to the nature of things; and I believe the truth of it on the teſtimony of the revealer. The eſtabliſhed explication of this propoſition is that of Ptolemy. He numbered the ſtars in the conſtellation Bootes, and found them, or ſuppoſed he found them, twenty-three, and this number I am to examine and approve, teach and defend againſt all opponents. What ſhall I ſay to Tycho, who affirms, Bootes contains only eighteen? Muſt I execrate Hevelius, who makes them fifty-two? After all, perhaps Flamſtead may be right; he ſays there are fifty-four. Does not this method of teaching aſtronomy ſuppoſe a hundred abſurdities? Does it not imply the imperfection of the revealed ſyſtem, the infallibility of Ptolemy, the erroneouſneſs of the other aſtronomers, the folly of examination, or the ſtill greater madneſs of allowing a concluſion after a denial of the premiſes, from which it pretends to be drawn? When I was an infant, I am told, I was treated like a man, now I am a man, I am treated like an infant. I am an aſtronomer by proxy. The plan of God requires faculties, and the exerciſe of them, that of my country exchanges both for quiet ſubmiſſion. I am, and I am not, a believer of aſtronomy.

Were it affirmed, that a revelation from heaven eſtabliſhed ſuch a method of maintaining a ſcience of ſpeculation, reaſoning, and practice, every rational creature would have a right to doubt the truth of ſuch a revelation; for it would violate the doctrine of analogy, by making the deity inconſiſtent with himſelf. But we will purſue this track no farther; we hope nothing ſaid will be deemed illiberal; we diſtinguiſh between a conſtitution of things, and many wiſe and good men, who ſubmit to it, and we only venture to gueſs, if they be wiſe and good men under ſuch inconveniencies, they would be wiſer and better men without them: at all adventures, if we owe much

reſpect to men, we owe more to truth, to unconvertible unchangeable truth.

A ſecond character of a divine revelation is *proportion.* By proportion I mean relative fitneſs, and, when I affirm, a divine revelation muſt bring along with it proportional evidence, I mean to ſay, it muſt appear to be exactly fitted to thoſe intelligent creatures, for whoſe benefit it is intended. In the former article we required a *ſimilarity* between the requiſitions of God and the faculties of men; in this we require an exact *quantity* of requiſition, commenſurate with thoſe faculties. The former regards the nature of a revelation; this has for its object the limits of it. Were it poſſible for God, having formed a man only for walking, by a meſſenger from heaven to require him to fly, the doctrine of analogy would be violated by this requiſition; and were he to determine a prodigious ſpace, through which he required him to paſs in a given time, were he to deſcribe an immenſe diſtance, and to enjoin him to move through it with a degree of velocity impoſſible to him, the doctrine of proportion would be violated; and the God of revelation would in both caſes be made contradictory to the God of nature.

The chriſtian revelation, we preſume, anſwers all our juſt expectations on theſe articles; for all the truths revealed by it are analogous to the nature of things, and every article in it bears an exact proportion to the abilities of all thoſe, for whoſe benefit it is given. Our Saviour treats of the doctrine of proportion in the parable of the talents, and ſuppoſes the Lord to apportion the number of talents, when he beſtows them, and the rewards and puniſhments, which he diſtributes for the uſe, and abuſe of them, to the *ſeveral ability* of each ſervant. S. Paul depicts the primitive church in all the beauty of this proportional œconomy; *the ſame God worketh all diverſities of operations in all differences of adminiſtrations, dividing to every man ſeverally as he will.* This œconomy, he ſays, aſſimilates

Mat. xxv. 14.

1 Cor. xii. 5, 6. 31.

ſimilates the chriſtian church to the human body, and gives to the one as to the other ſtrength, ſymmetry, and beauty, evidently proving that the author of creation is the author of redemption, framing both by one uniform rule of analogy and proportion.

Full of theſe juſt notions, we examine that deſcription of revelation, which human creeds exhibit, and we perceive at once, they are all deſtitute of proportional evidence. They all conſiſt of multifarious propoſitions, each of which is conſidered as eſſential to the whole, and the belief of all eſſential to an enjoyment of the benefits of chriſtianity, yea to thoſe of civil ſociety, in this life, and to a participation of eternal life in the world to come. In this caſe the free gifts of God to all are monopolized by a few, and ſold out to the many at a price, far greater than nine-tenths of them can pay, and at a price, which the remaining part ought not to pay, becauſe the donor has not empowered theſe ſaleſmen to exact any price, becauſe by his original grant all are made joint proprietors, and becauſe the payment would be at once a renunciation of their right to hold by the original grant, and of their lord's prerogative to beſtow.

What can a declaimer mean, when he repeats a number of propoſitions, and declares the belief of them all eſſential to the ſalvation of *man?* or what could he reply to one, who ſhould aſk him, Which man do you mean, the man in the ſtall? It is Sir Iſaac Newton: or the man in the aile? It is Tom Long, the carrier. God Almighty, the creator of both, has formed theſe two men with different organs of body, and different faculties of mind; he has given them different advantages and different opportunities of improving them, he has placed them in different relations, and empowered the one to teach what the other, depend on his belief what will, is not capable of learning. Ten thouſand Tom Longs go to make up one Newtonian ſoul. Is it credible, the God,

God, who made theſe two men, who thoroughly knows them, who is the common parent, the juſt governor, and the kind benefactor of both, ſhould require of men ſo different equal belief and practice? Were ſuch a thing ſuppoſeable, how unequal and diſproportional, how inadequate and unlike himſelf muſt ſuch a deity be! To graſp the terraqueous globe with a human hand, to make a tulip-cup contain the ocean, to gather all the light of the univerſe into one human eye, to hide the ſun in a ſnuff-box, are the mighty projects of childrens fancies. Is it poſſible, requiſitions ſimilar to theſe ſhould proceed from *the only wiſe God!*

There is, we have reaſon to believe, a certain portion of ſpirit, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, that conſtitutes a human ſoul; there are infinitely different degrees of capability imparted by the Creator to the ſouls of mankind; and there is a certain ratio by neceſſity of nature between each degree of intelligence and a given number of ideas, as there is between a cup capable of containing a given quantity, and a quantity of matter capable of being contained in it. In certain caſes it might ſerve my intereſt could the palm of my hand contain a hogſhead: but in general my intereſt is better ſerved by an inability to contain ſo much. We apply theſe certain principles to revelation, and we ſay, God hath given in the chriſtian religion an infinite multitude of ideas; as in nature he hath created an infinite multitude of objects. Theſe objects are diverſified without end, they are of various ſizes, colours, and ſhapes, and they are capable of innumerable motions, productive of multifarious effects, and all placed in various degrees of perſpicuity; objects of thought in the chriſtian religion are exactly ſimilar, there is no end of their variety, God and all his perfections, man and all his operations, the being and employment of ſuperior holy ſpirits, the exiſtence and diſpoſitions of fallen ſpirits, the creation and government of the whole

whole world of matter, and that of ſpirit, the influences of God and the obligations of men, the diſſolution of the univerſe, a reſurrection, a judgment, a heaven, and a hell, all theſe, placed in various degrees of perſpicuity, are exhibited in religion to the contemplation of intelligent creatures. The creatures, who are required to contemplate theſe objects, have various degrees of contemplative ability, and their duty, and conſequently their virtue, which is nothing elſe but a performance of duty, conſiſts in applying all their ability to underſtand as many of theſe objects, that is, to form as many ideas of them, as are apportioned to their own degree. So many objects they are capable of ſeeing, ſo many objects it is their duty to ſee. So much of each object they are capable of comprehending, ſo much of each object it is their duty to comprehend. So many emotions they are capable of exerciſing, ſo many emotions it is their duty to exerciſe. So many acts of devotion they can perform, ſo many Almighty God will reward them for performing, or puniſh them for neglecting. This I call the doctrine of religious proportion. This I have a right to expect to find in a divine revelation, and this I find in the moſt ſplendid manner in chriſtianity, as it lies in the Bible, as it was in the firſt churches, and as it is in ſome modern communities. I wiſh I could exchange the word ſome for all.

This doctrine of proportion would unrooſt every human creed in the world, at leaſt it would annihilate the impoſition of any. Inſtead of making one creed for a whole nation, which, by the way, provides for only one nation, and conſigns over the reſt of the world to the deſtroyer of mankind; inſtead of doing ſo, there ſhould be as many creeds as creatures; and inſtead of affirming, the belief of three hundred propoſitions is eſſential to the felicity of every man in both worlds, we ought to affirm, the belief of half a propoſition is eſſential to the ſalvation of Mary, and

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the belief of a whole one to that of John, the belief of ſix propoſitions, or, more properly, the examination of ſix propoſitions, is eſſential to the ſalvation of the reverend Edward, and the examination of ſixty to that of the right reverend Richard; for, if I can prove, one has ſixty degrees of capacity, another ſix, and another one, I can eaſily prove, it would be unjuſt to require the ſame exerciſes of all; and a champion aſcribing ſuch injuſtice to God would be no formidable adverſary for the pompouſneſs of his challenge, or the capariſons of his horſe: his very ſword could not conquer, though it might affright from the field.

The world and revelation, both the work of the ſame God, are both conſtructed on the ſame principles; and were the book of ſcripture like that of nature laid open to univerſal inſpection, were all ideas of temporal rewards and puniſhments removed from the ſtudy of it, that would come to paſs in the moral world, which has actually happened in the world of human ſcience, each capacity would find its own object, and take its own quantum. Newtons will find ſtars without penalties, Miltons will be poets, and Lardners chriſtians without rewards, Calvins will contemplate the decrees of God, and Baxters will try to aſſort them with the ſpontaneous volitions of men; all, like the celeſtial bodies, will roll on in the quiet majeſty of ſimple proportion, each in his proper ſphere ſhining to the glory of God the creator. But alas! *We have not ſo learned Chriſt!*

Were this doctrine of proportion allowed, three conſequences would follow. Firſt, Subſcription to human creeds, with all their appendages, both penal and pompous, would roll back into the turbulent ocean, the *See* I mean, from whence they came; the bible would remain a placid emanation of wiſdom from God; and the belief of it a ſufficient teſt of the obedience of his people. Secondly, Chriſtians would be freed from the inhuman neceſſity of execrating one another

another, and, by placing chriſtianity in believing in Chriſt, and not in believing in one another, they would rid revelation of thoſe intolerable abuſes, which are fountains of ſorrow to chriſtians, and ſources of arguments to infidels. Thirdly, Opportunity would be given to believers in Chriſt to exerciſe thoſe diſpoſitions, which the preſent diſproportional diviſion of this common benefit obliges them to ſuppreſs, or conceal. O cruel theology, that makes it a crime to do what I have neither a right nor a power to leave undone!

I call *perfection* a third neceſſary character of a divine revelation. Every production of an intelligent being bears the characters of the intelligence, that produced it, *for as the man is, ſo is his ſtrength.* A weak genius produces a work imperfect and weak like itſelf. A wiſe, good being produces a work wiſe and good, and, if his power be equal to his wiſdom and goodneſs, his work will reſemble himſelf, and ſuch a degree of wiſdom, animated by an equal degree of goodneſs, and aſſiſted by an equal degree of power, will produce a work equally wiſe, equally beneficial, equally effectual. The ſame degrees of goodneſs and power accompanied with only half the degree of wiſdom, will produce a work as remarkable for a deficiency of ſkill as for a redundancy of efficiency and benevolence. Thus the flexibility of the hand may be known by the writing; the power of penetrating, and combining in the mind of the phyſician, may be known by the feelings of the patient, who has taken his preſcription; and, by parity of reaſon, the uniform perfections of an inviſible God may be known by the uniform perfection of his productions. Judg. viii. 21.

I perceive, I muſt not launch into this wide ocean of the doctrine of perfection, and I will confine myſelf to three characters of imperfection, which may ſerve to explain my meaning. Propoſing to obtain a

great end without the uſe of proper means—The employing of great means to obtain no valuable end—and the deſtroying of the end by the uſe of the means employed to obtain it; are three characters of imperfection rarely found in frail intelligent agents: and certainly they can never be attributed to the Great Supreme. A violation of the doctrine of analogy would argue God an unjuſt being; a violation of that of proportion would prove him an unkind being; and a violation of this of perfection would argue him a being void of wiſdom. Were we to ſuppoſe him capable of propoſing plans impoſſible to be executed, and then puniſhing his creatures for not executing them, we ſhould attribute to the beſt of beings the moſt odious diſpoſitions of the moſt infamous of mankind. Heaven forbid the thought!

The firſt character of imperfection is *propoſing to obtain a great end without the uſe of proper means.* To propoſe a noble end argues a fund of goodneſs: but not to propoſe proper means to obtain it argues a defect of wiſdom. Chriſtianity propoſes the noble end of aſſimilating man to God; and it employs proper means of obtaining this end. God is an intelligent being happy in a perfection of wiſdom; the goſpel aſſimilates the felicity of human intelligences to that of the deity by communicating the ideas of God on certain articles to men. God is a bountiful being happy in a perfection of goodneſs; the goſpel aſſimilates the felicity of man to that of God by communicating certain benevolent diſpoſitions to its diſciples ſimilar to the communicative excellencies of God. God is an operative being happy in the diſplay of exterior works beneficent to his creatures; the goſpel felicitates man by directing and enabling him to perform certain works beneficent to his fellow-creatures. God condeſcends to propoſe this noble end, of aſſimilating man to himſelf, to the nature of mankind, and not to certain

tain diſtinctions foreign from the nature of man, and appendent on exterior circumſtances. The boy, who feeds the farmer's meaneſt animals, the ſailor, who ſpends his days on the ocean, the miner, who, ſecluded from the light of the day, and the ſociety of his fellow-creatures, ſpends his life in a ſubterraneous cavern, as well as the renowned heroes of mankind, are all included in this condeſcending benevolent deſign of God. The goſpel propoſes to aſſimilate all to God: but it propoſes ſuch an aſſimilation, or, may I ſay? ſuch a degree of moral excellence, as the nature of each can bear, and it directs to means ſo proper to obtain this end, and renders theſe directions ſo extremely plain, that the perfection of the deſigner ſhines with the utmoſt glory.

I have ſometimes imagined a Pagan ſhip's crew in a veſſel under ſail in the wide ocean; I have ſuppoſed not one ſoul aboard ever to have heard one word of chriſtianity; I have imagined a bird dropping a New Teſtament written in the language of the mariners on the upper deck; I have imagined a fund of uneducated, unſophiſticated good ſenſe in this company, and I have required of this little world anſwers to two queſtions; firſt, What end does this book propoſe? The anſwer is, This book *was written, that we might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name.* John xx. 31. I aſk ſecondly, What means doth this book authorize a foremaſt man, who believes, to employ to the reſt of the crew to induce them to believe, that Jeſus is the ſon of God, and that believing they alſo with the foremaſt man may have eternal felicity through his name? I dare not anſwer this queſtion: but I dare venture to gueſs, ſhould this foremaſt man conceal the book from any of the crew, he would be unlike the God, who gave it to all; or ſhould he oblige the cabin-boy to admit his explication of the book, he would be

unlike the God, who requires the boy to explain it to himſelf; and ſhould he require the captain to enforce his explication by penalties, the captain ought to reprove his folly for counteracting the end of the book, the felicity of all the mariners; for turning a meſſage of peace into an engine of faction; for employing means inadequate to the end; and ſo for eraſing that character of perfection, which the heavenly donor gave it.

A ſecond character of imperfection is *the employing of great means to obtain no valuable end.* Whatever end the author of chriſtianity had in view, it is beyond a doubt, he hath employed great means to effect it. To uſe the language of a prophet, he hath *ſhaken the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land.* When *the deſire of all nations* came, univerſal nature felt his approach, and preternatural diſplays of wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, have ever attended his ſteps. The moſt valuable ends were anſwered by his coming. Conviction followed his preaching; and truths, till then ſhut up in the counſels of God, were actually put into the poſſeſſion of finite minds. A general manumiſſion followed his meritorious death, and the earth reſounded with the praiſes of a ſpiritual deliverer, who had ſet the ſons of bondage free. The laws of his empire were publiſhed, and all his ſubjects were happy in obeying them. *In his days the righteous flouriſhed,* and on his plan, *abundance of peace* would have continued *as long as the moon endured.* Plenty of inſtruction, liberty to examine it, and peace in obeying it, theſe were ends worthy of the great means uſed to obtain them.

Hag. ii. 6, 7.

Pſal. lxxii. 7.

Let us for a moment ſuppoſe a ſubverſion of the ſeventy-ſecond pſalm, from whence I have borrowed theſe ideas; let us imagine *the kings of Tarſhiſh and of the iſles bringing preſents,* not to expreſs their homage to Chriſt: but to purchaſe that dominion over

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the conſciences of mankind, which belongs to Jeſus Chriſt; let us ſuppoſe the boundleſs wiſdom of the goſpel, and the innumerable ideas of inſpired men concerning it, ſhrivelled up into the narrow compaſs of one human creed; let us ſuppoſe liberty of thought taken away; and the peace of the world interrupted by the introduction and ſupport of bold uſurpations, dry ceremonies, cant phraſes, and puerile inventions; in this ſuppoſed caſe, the hiſtory of great means remains, the worthy ends to be anſwered by them are taken away, and they, who ſhould thus deprive mankind of the end of the ſacred code, would charge themſelves with the neceſſary obligation of accounting for this character of imperfection. Ye prophets, and apoſtles! ye ambaſſadors of Chriſt! *How do ye ſay, We are wiſe, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo! certainly in vain made he it, the pen of the ſcribes is in vain!* Jer. viii. 8. Precarious wiſdom, that muſt not be queſtioned! uſeleſs books, which muſt not be examined! vain legiſlation, that either cannot be obeyed, or ruins him, who obeys it!

All the ends, that can be obtained by human modifications of divine revelation, can never compenſate for the loſs of that dignity, which the perfection of the ſyſtem, as God gave it, acquires to him; nor can it indemnify man for the loſs of that ſpontaneity, which is the eſſence of every effort, that merits the name of human, and without which virtue itſelf is nothing but a name. Muſt we deſtroy the man to make the chriſtian! What is there in a ſcholaſtic honour, what in an eccleſiaſtical emolument, what in an archiepiſcopal throne, to indemnify for theſe loſſes! Jeſus Chriſt gave his life a ranſom for men, not to empower them to enjoy theſe momentary diſtinctions; theſe are far inferior to the noble ends of his coming: the honour of God and the goſpel at large; the diſintereſted exerciſe of mental abilities, aſſimilating the free-born

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ſoul to its benevolent God; a copartnerſhip with Chriſt in promoting the univerſal felicity of all mankind; theſe, theſe are ends of religion worthy of the blood of Jeſus, and deſerving the ſacrifice of whatever is called great among men.

Thirdly, *the deſtruction of the end by the uſe of the means employed to obtain it* is another character of imperfection. S. Paul calls chriſtianity *unity*. He denominates it *the unity of the ſpirit*, on account of its author, object, and end. God, the ſupreme ſpirit, is the author of it, the ſpirits, or ſouls, of men are the object, and the ſpirituality of human ſouls, that is, the perfection, of which finite ſpirits are capable, is the end of it. The goſpel propoſes the re-union of men divided by ſin, firſt to God, and then to one another, and, in order to effect it, reveals a religion, which teaches *one God, one mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus, one* rule of *faith, one* object of *hope*; and, leſt we ſhould imagine this revelation to admit of no variety, we are told, *Grace is given to every one according to the proportional meaſure of the gift of* chriſtianity. Each believer is therefore exhorted to *ſpeak the truth in love*, to *walk with all lowlineſs, meekneſs, and long-ſuffering*, and to *forbear* another *in love*. Here is a character of perfection, for theſe means employed to unite mankind are productive of union, the end of the means.

Eph. iv. 3, &c.

1 Tim. ii. 5.

Should men take up the goſpel in this ſimplicity; and, accommodating it to their own imaginary ſuperior wiſdom, or to their own ſecular purpoſes, ſhould they explain this union ſo as to ſuit their deſigns, and employ means to produce it; and ſhould they denominate their ſyſtem chriſtianity, it would certainly be, in ſpite of its name, a chriſtianity marked with the imperfection of its authors; for in the chriſtian religion, in the thing itſelf, and not in its appellation, ſhines the glorious character of perfection.

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The chriſtian religion unites mankind. By what common *bond* does it propoſe to do ſo? By *love*. This is *a bond of perfectneſs*, a moſt perfect bond. This is practicable, and productive of every deſirable end, and the more we ſtudy human nature, the more fully ſhall we be convinced, that we cannot imagine any religion to do more, nor need we deſire more, for this anſwers every end of being religious. Had Jeſus Chriſt formed his church on a *ſentimental* plan, he muſt have employed many means, which he has not employed, and he muſt have omitted many directions, which he has given. One of his means of uniting mankind is contained in this direction, *Search the Scriptures*, and *call no man your maſter upon earth*; that is to ſay, exerciſe your very different abilities, aſſiſted by very different degrees of aid, in periods of very different duration, and form your own notions of the doctrines contained in the Scriptures. Is not this injunction deſtructive of a ſentimental union? Place ten thouſand ſpectators in ſeveral circles around a ſtatue erected on a ſpacious plain, bid ſome look at it through magnifying glaſſes, others through common ſpectacles, ſome with keen naked eyes, others with weak diſeaſed eyes, each on a point of each circle different from that, where another ſtands, and all receiving the picture of the object in the eye by different reflections and refractions of the rays of light, and ſay, will not a command to look deſtroy the idea of ſentimental union; and, if the eſtabliſhment of an exact union of ſentiment be the end, will not looking, the mean appointed to obtain it, actually deſtroy it, and would not ſuch a projector of uniformity mark his ſyſtem with imperfection?

Had Jeſus Chriſt formed his church on the plan of a *ceremonial* union, or on that of a *profeſſional* union, it is eaſy to ſee, the ſame reaſoning might be applied, the laws of ſuch a legiſlator would counteract and deſtroy one another, and a ſyſtem ſo unconnected would diſcover the

the imperfection of its author, and provide for the ruin of itſelf.

Theſe principles being allowed, we proceed to examine the doctrines of chriſtianity, as they are preſented to an inquiſitive man, entirely at liberty to chooſe his religion, by our different churches in their ſeveral creeds. The church of Rome lays before me the deciſions of the council of Trent; The Lutheran church the confeſſion of Augſburg; One nation gives me one account of chriſtianity, another a different account of it, a third contradicts the other two, and no two creeds agree. The difference of theſe ſyſtems obliges me to allow, they could not all proceed from any one perſon, and much leſs could they all proceed from ſuch a perſon, as all chriſtians affirm Jeſus Chriſt to be. I am driven then, to examine his account of his own religion contained in the allowed ſtandard book, to which they all appeal, and here I find, or think I find, a right of reduction, that removes all thoſe ſuſpicions, which variety in human creeds had excited in my mind concerning the truth of chriſtianity.

The doctrines of chriſtianity, I preſume to gueſs, according to the uſual ſenſe of the phraſe, are diviſible into two claſſes. The firſt contains the principal truths, the pure genuine theology of Jeſus Chriſt, eſſential to the ſyſtem, and in which all chriſtians in our various communities agree. The other claſs conſiſts of thoſe leſs important propoſitions, which are meant to ſerve as explications of the principal truths. The firſt is the matter of our holy religion, the laſt is our conception of the manner of its operation. In the firſt we all agree, in the laſt our benevolent religion, conſtructed on principles of analogy, proportion, and perfection, both enjoins and empowers us to agree to differ. The firſt is the light of the world, the laſt our ſentiments on its nature, or our diſtribution of its effects.

In general each church calls its own creed a ſyſtem of chriſtianity, a body of chriſtian doctrine, and perhaps

haps not improperly: but then each divine ought to diſtinguiſh that part of his ſyſtem, which is pure revelation, and ſo ſtands confeſſedly the doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, from that other part, which is human explication, and ſo may be either true or falſe, clear or obſcure, preſumptive or demonſtrative, according to the abilities of the explainer, who compiled the creed. Without this diſtinction, we may incorporate all our opinions with the infallible revelations of heaven, we may imagine each article of our belief eſſential to chriſtianity itſelf, we may ſubjoin a human codicil to a divine teſtament, and attribute equal authenticity to both, we may account a propoſition confirmed by a ſynodical ſeal as fully authenticated as a truth confirmed by an apoſtolical miracle, and ſo we may bring ourſelves to rank a conſcientious diſciple of Chriſt, who denies the neceſſity of epiſcopal ordination, with a brazen diſciple of the devil, who denies the truth of revelation, and pretends to doubt the being of a God.

But here, I feel again the force of that obſervation, with which this preface begins. How few, comparatively, will allow, that ſuch a reduction of a large ſyſtem to a very ſmall number of clear, indiſputable, eſſential firſt principles, will ſerve the cauſe of chriſtianity! How many will pretend to think ſuch a reduction dangerous to thirty-five out of thirty-nine articles of faith! How many will confound a denial of the eſſentiality (ſo to ſpeak.) of a propoſition, with a denial of the truth of it! How many will go farther ſtill, and execrate the latitudinarian, who preſumes in this manner to ſubvert Chriſtianity itſelf! I rejoice in proſpect of that *day*, *when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt according to his goſpel*, when we ſhall ſtand not at the tribunal of human prejudices and paſſions, but at the juſt bar of a clement God. Here, were I only concerned, I would reſt, and my anſwer to all complainants ſhould be a reſpectful ſilence before

Rom. ii. 16.

their oracles of reaſon and religion: but alas! I have nine children, and my ambition is (if it be not an unpardonable preſumption to compare inſects with angels.) my ambition is to engage them to treat a ſpirit of intolerance, as Hamilcar taught Hannibal to treat the old Roman ſpirit of univerſal dominion. The enthuſiaſtic Carthaginian parent, going to offer a ſacrifice to Jupiter for the ſucceſs of an intended war, took with him his little ſon Hannibal, then only nine years of age, and eager to accompany his father, led him to the altar, made him lay his little hand on the ſacrifice, and ſwear, that he would never be in friendſhip with the Romans. We may ſanctify this thought, by tranſferring it to other objects, and, while we ſing in the church glory to God in the higheſt, vow perpetual peace with all mankind, and reject all weapons except thoſe, which are ſpiritual, we may, we muſt declare war againſt a ſpirit of intolerance from generation to generation. Thus Moſes wrote *a memorial in a book, rehearſed it in the ears of Joſhua, built an altar, called the name of it Jehovah my banner, and ſaid, The Lord hath ſworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*

Exod. xvii. 14, 15, 16.

We are neither going to contraſt human creeds with one another, nor with the Bible; we are not going to affirm or deny any propoſitions contained in them; we only deſign to prove, that all conſiſt of human explications as well as divine revelations, and conſequently, that all are not of equal importance, nor ought any to be impoſed on the diſciples of Chriſt, either by thoſe, who are not diſciples of the Son of God, or by thoſe, who are. The ſubject is delicate and difficult, not through any intricacy in itſelf, but through a certain infelicity of the times. An error on the one ſide may be fatal to revelation, by alluring us to ſacrifice the pure doctrines of religion to a blind benevolence; and on the other an error may be fatal to religion itſelf by inducing us to make it a patron of intolerance. We

repeat

repeat it again, a ſyſtem of chriſtian doctrine is the object of chriſtian liberty; the articles, which compoſe a human ſyſtem of chriſtian doctrine, are diviſible into the two claſſes of *doctrines*, and *explications*; the firſt we attribute to *Chriſt*, and call *Chriſtian* doctrines, the laſt to ſome of his *diſciples*, and theſe we call *human* explications; the firſt *are* true, the laſt *may be* ſo; the firſt execrate intolerance, the laſt cannot be ſupported without the ſpirit of it. I will endeavour to explain my meaning by an example.

Every believer of revelation allows the authenticity of this paſſage of Holy Scripture, *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh: but have everlaſting life.* If we caſt this into propoſitional form, it will afford as many propoſitions as it contains ideas. Each idea clearly contained in the text I call an idea of Jeſus Chriſt, a chriſtian ſentiment, a truth of revelation, in a word, a *chriſtian doctrine.* Each of theſe ideas of the text in forming itſelf into a propoſition will naturally aſſociate with itſelf a few other ideas of the expletive kind, theſe I call ſecondary ideas in diſtinction from the firſt, which I call primary; or, in plainer ſtyle, ideas clearly of the *text* I name chriſtian doctrines, or doctrines of Chriſt, and *all the reſt* I call human explications of theſe doctrines; they may be chriſtian, they may not; for I am not ſure, that the next idea, which always follows a firſt in my mind, was the next idea to the firſt in the mind of Jeſus Chriſt; the firſt is certainly his, he declares it, the ſecond might be his: but as he is ſilent, I can ſay nothing certain; where he ſtops, my infallibility ends, and my uncertain reaſon begins. John iii. 16.

The following propoſitions are evidently in the text, and conſequently they are chriſtian doctrines emaning from the author of chriſtianity, and pauſing to be examined before the intelligent powers of his creatures. —There is an *everlaſting life*, a future ſtate of eternal happi-

happineſs—the mediation of *the only begotten Son of God* is neceſſary to men's enjoyment of eternal happineſs—*believing* in Chriſt is eſſential to a participation of eternal felicity—every believer in Chriſt *ſhall have everlaſting life*—unbelievers ſhall *periſh*—all the bleſſings of chriſtianity originate in *God*, diſplay his *love*, and are *given* to the *world*. Theſe, methinks, we may venture to call primary ideas of chriſtianity, genuine truths of revelation: but each doctrine will give occaſion to many queſtions, and although different expoſitors will agree in the matter of each propoſition, they will conjecture very differently concerning the manner of its operation.

One diſciple of Chriſt, whom we call Richard, having read this text, having exerciſed his thoughts on the meaning of it, and having arranged them in the propoſitional form now mentioned, if he would convince another diſciple, whom we name Robert, of the truth of any one of his propoſitions, would be obliged to unfold his own train of thinking, which conſiſts of an aſſociated concatenation of ideas, ſome of which are primary ideas of Jeſus Chriſt, and others ſecondary notions of his own, additions, perhaps of his wiſdom, perhaps of his folly, perhaps of both: but all, however, intended to *explicate* his notion of the text, and to facilitate the evidence of his notion to his brother. Robert admits the propoſition: but not exactly in Richard's ſenſe. In this caſe, we aſſort ideas, we take what both allow to be the original ideas of our common Lord, and we reckon thus, Here are nine ideas in this propoſition, numbers one, three, ſix, nine, genuine, primary ideas of Chriſt; numbers two, four, five, ſecondary ideas of Richard; numbers ſeven, eight, ſecondary ideas of Robert: the firſt conſtitute a divine doctrine, the laſt a human explication; the firſt forms one divine object, the laſt two human notions of its mode of exiſtence, manner of operation, or ſomething ſimilar: but, be each what it may,

it

it is human explication, and neither ſynod nor ſenate can make it more.

No divine will diſpute the truth of this propoſition, God gave Jeſus Chriſt to believers; for it is demonſtrably in the text. To this, therefore, Beza and Zanchy, Melancthon and Luther, Calvin and Arminius, Baxter and Criſp agree, all allowing it a chriſtian doctrine: but, each aſſociating with the idea of gift other ideas of time, place, relation, condition, and ſo on, explains the doctrine ſo as to contain all his own additional ideas.

One claſs of expoſitors take the idea of *time*, and by it explain the propoſition. God and believers, ſays one, are to be conſidered contemplatively *before the creation* in the light of creator and creatures, abſtracted from all moral conſiderations whatever; then God united Chriſt to his church in the pure maſs of creatureſhip, without the contemplation of Adam's fall. Another affirms, God gave a Saviour to men in *deſign before* the exiſtence of creatures: but in full contemplation, however, of the miſery induced by the fall. A third ſays, God gave Chriſt to believers, not in purpoſe before the fall: but in *promiſe* immediately *after* it. A fourth adds, God gives Chriſt to believers *on their believing*, by putting them in poſſeſſion of the benefits of chriſtianity. In all theſe ſyſtems, the ideas of God, Chriſt, believers, and gift remain, the pure genuine ideas of the text; and the aſſociation of time diſtinguiſheth and varieth the ſyſtems.

A ſecond claſs of expoſitors take the idea of *relation*, and one affirms, God and believers are to be conſidered in the relative light of *governor and ſubjects*, the characters of a perfect government are diſcernible in the giving of a Saviour, juſtice vindicates the honour of government by puniſhing ſome, mercy diſplays the benefit of government by pardoning others, and royal prerogative both diſculpates and elevates the guilty,

guilty, however, as the governor is a God, he retains and diſplays his abſolute right of diſpenſing his favours as he pleaſes. A ſecond ſays, God and believers are to be conſidered in the light of *parent and children*, and Chriſt is not given to believers according to mere maxims of exact government: but he is beſtowed by God, the common father, impartially on all his children. A third ſays, God and believers are to be conſidered in the light of *maſter and ſervants*, and God rewards the imperfect ſervices of his creatures with the rich benefits of chriſtianity. A fourth conſiders God and believers in the relation of *King and conſort*, and ſay, God gave chriſtianity as an inalienable dowry to his choſen aſſociate. In all theſe ſyſtems, God, Chriſt, believers, and gift remain, the pure genuine ideas of the text; and the aſſociation of the idea of relation diſtinguiſhes and varies the ſyſtems.

In general, we form ideas of the Supreme Being, and we think, ſuch a being ought to act ſo and ſo, and therefore we conclude he does act ſo and ſo. God gives Chriſt to believers conditionally, ſays one, for ſo it becomes a holy being to beſtow all his gifts. God gives Chriſt unconditionally, ſays another; for ſo it becomes a merciful being to beſtow his gifts on the miſerable. I repeat it again, oppoſite as theſe may appear, they both retain the notions of the ſame God, the ſame Jeſus, the ſame believers, the ſame giving: but an idea concerning *the fitteſt way of beſtowing* the gift diſtinguiſhes and varies the ſyſtems. I call it the ſame giving, becauſe all divines, even they, who go moſt into a ſcheme of conditional ſalvation, allow, that Chriſt is a bleſſing infinitely beyond all that is due to the conditions, which they perform in order to their enjoyment of him.

Let us for a moment ſuppoſe, that this propoſition, God gives Chriſt to believers, is the whole of revelation on this ſubject. A divine, who ſhould affirm, that his ideas of time, relation, and condition were neceſſarily contained in this ſcripture; that his whole

theſis

theſis was a doctrine of chriſtianity; and that the belief of it was eſſential to ſalvation; would affirm the moſt palpable abſurdities; for, although the propoſition does ſay, Chriſt is God's gift to believers, yet it does neither ſay, *when* God beſtowed this gift, nor *why* he beſtowed it, nor that a preciſe knowledge of the *mode* of donation is eſſentially requiſite to ſalvation. That God gave the world a Saviour in the perſon of Jeſus is a fact affirmed by Chriſt in this propoſition, and therefore a chriſtian doctrine. That he made the donation abſolutely or conditionally, before the fall or after it, reverſibly or irrevocably, the propoſition doth not affirm; and therefore every propoſition including any of theſe ideas is an article of belief containing a chriſtian doctrine and an human explication, and conſequently it lies before an examiner in different degrees of evidence and importance.

Suppoſe a man were required to believe this propoſition, God gave Jeſus to believers abſolutely, or this, God gave Jeſus to believers conditionally; it is not impoſſible, the whole propoſition might be proved original, genuine, primary doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt. Our propoſition in this text could not prove it, and were this the whole of our information on this article, conditionality and unconditionality would be human explications: but, if Chriſt have given us in any other part of revelation, more inſtruction on this ſubject; if he any where affirm, either that he was given on certain conditions to be performed by believers, or that he was not given ſo, then indeed we might aſſociate the ideas of one text with thoſe of another, and ſo form of the whole a genuine chriſtian doctrine.

When we have thus ſelected the inſtructions of our divine maſter from the opinions of our fellow-pupils, we ſhould ſuppoſe, theſe queſtions would naturally ariſe, Is a belief of all the doctrines of Chriſt eſſential to ſalvation? If not, which are the eſſential truths? If the parable of the talents be allowed a part of his doctrine,

doctrine, and if the doctrine of proportion taught in that parable be true, it ſhould ſeem, the belief of chriſtian doctrines muſt be proportioned to exterior evidence and interior ability; and, on theſe principles, ſhould a congregation of five hundred chriſtians put theſe queſtions, they muſt receive five hundred different anſwers. *Who is ſufficient for theſe things!* Let us renounce our inclination to damn our fellow-creatures. Let us excite all to faith and repentance, and let us leave the deciſion of their deſtiny to Almighty God. *When Chriſt cometh he will tell us all things*, till then let us wait, leſt we ſhould ſcatter *firebrands, arrows, and death*, and *make the hearts of the righteous ſad, whom the Lord hath not made ſad.* How many doctrines are eſſential to ſalvation, ſeems to me exactly ſuch a queſtion, as How much food is eſſential to animal life?

John iv. 25. Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. Ezek. xiii. 22.

We will venture to go a ſtep farther. Were we as capable of determining the exact ratio between any particular mind and a given number of ideas, as we are of determining how many feet of water a veſſel of a given burthen muſt draw; and were we able ſo to determine how much faith in how many doctrines was eſſential to the holineſs, and ſo to the happineſs of ſuch a ſoul; we ſhould not then entertain a vain notion of exacting by force theſe rights of God of his creature. For, firſt, the ſame proportion, which renders a certain number of ideas eſſential to the happineſs of an intelligent mind, renders this number of ideas ſo clear, that they eſtabliſh themſelves and need no impoſition. Secondly, the nature of faith does not admit of impoſition; it ſignifies nothing to ſay, Kings command it; if angels commanded it, they would require an impoſſibility, and exact that of me, which they theirſelves could not perform. Thirdly, God has appointed no means to enforce belief, he has nominated no vicegerents to do this, he has expreſsly forbidden the attempt. Fourthly, the means, that one man muſt employ

ploy to impoſe his creed on another, are all nefarious, and damn a ſinner to make a ſaint. Fifthly, impoſition of human creeds has produced ſo much miſchief in the world, ſo many diviſions among chriſtians, and ſo many execrable actions, attended with no one good end to religion, that the repetition of this crime would argue a ſoul infeſted with the groſſeſt ignorance, or the moſt ſtubborn obſtinacy imaginable. Sixthly, dominion over conſcience is that part of God's empire, of which he is moſt jealous. The impoſition of a human creed is a third action, and before any man can perform it, he muſt do two other exploits, he muſt uſurp the throne, and claim the ſlave. How many more reaſons might be added! From a cool examination of the nature of God—the nature of man—the nature of chriſtianity—the nature of all powers within the compaſs of human thought to employ—the hiſtory of paſt times—the ſtate of the preſent—in a word, of every idea, that belongs to the impoſition of a human creed, we venture to affirm, the attempt is irrational, unſcriptural, impracticable, impoſſible. Creed is belief, and the production of belief by penal ſanctions neither is, nor was, nor is to come. The project never entered the mind of a profeſſor of any ſcience, except that of theology. It is high time, theologiſts ſhould explode it. The glorious pretence of eſtabliſhing by force implicit belief ſhould be left to the little tyrant of a country ſchool; let him lay down dry documents, gird falſe rules cloſe about other men's ſons, laſh docility into vanity, ſtupidity, or madneſs, and juſtify his violence by ſpluttering, *Sic volo, ſic jubeo, ſtat pro ratione voluntas.*

Were chriſtians ſincere in their profeſſions of moderation, candour, and love, they would ſettle this preliminary article of IMPOSITION, and, this given up, there would be nothing elſe to diſpute. Our objections lie neither againſt ſurplice nor ſervice-book: but againſt the impoſition of them. Let one party of

chriſtians worſhip God as their conſciences direct: but let other parties forfeit nothing for doing the ſame. It may appear conjectural: but it is ſincerely true, theological war is the moſt futile and expenſive conteſt, theological peace the cheapeſt acquiſition in the world.

Although the diſtinction of a divine revelation from a human explication is juſt and neceſſary, although the principles of analogy, proportion, and perfection are undeniable, and although, conſidered as a theory, the nature and neceſſity of univerſal toleration will be allowed to be as clear and demonſtrative as poſſible, yet, we are well aware, the allowance of theſe articles in all their fair, juſt, neceſſary conſequences would be ſo inimical to many diſpoſitions, and ſo effectually ſubverſive of ſo many ſelfiſh intereſted ſyſtems, that we entertain no hopes of ever ſeeing the theory generally reduced to practice. Heaven may exhibit a ſcene of univerſal love, and it is glorious to chriſtianity to propoſe it; it is an idea replete with extatic joy, and, thanks be to God, it is more than an idea, it is a law in many chriſtian churches, alas! little known, and leſs imitated by the reſt of their brethren. There is *a remnant of Jacob in the midſt of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the ſhowers upon the graſs, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the ſons of men.* Theſe may chearfully adopt the prophet's exultation, *Rejoice not againſt me, O mine enemy! If I fall, I ſhall ariſe; when I ſit in darkneſs the Lord ſhall be a light unto me, he will bring me forth to the light, and I ſhall behold his righteouſneſs. In the day, that my walls are to be built, in that day ſhall* human *decrees* concerning conſcience *be far removed.*

Micah v. 7.

vii. 8.

xii

On theſe general principles the ſermons in this volume are ſelected, and on theſe the reader will at once perceive why it does not contain the whole ſyſtem of any one ſubſcriber, or the whole ſyſtem of the author. Each contains primary truths, which all allow, and ſecondary explications, which ſome believe, which others doubt,

doubt, and which ſome deny. I have not been able to form the volume wholly on this plan: but I have endeavoured to approach it as nearly as my materials would permit.

The firſt ſermon is introductory, and exhibits Jeſus Chriſt on the throne in the chriſtian church, ſolely veſted with legiſlative and executive power, prohibiting the exerciſe of either in caſes of religion and conſcience to all mankind. The twelve following ſermons propoſe *four* objects to our contemplation, as chriſtianity repreſents them. The firſt is *man*, in his natural dignity, his providential appointment, and his moral inability. The ſecond is *Jeſus Chriſt* mediating between God and men, and opening by what he did and ſuffered our acceſs to immortal felicity. The ſermon on the dignity of our Lord, in this part, will be conſidered by ſome as a principal eſſential *doctrine*, while others will account it Mr. Saurin's *explication* of a doctrine of ineffable dignity, which they allow: but which they explain in another manner. The third object propoſed is *the mode of participating* the benefits of Chriſt's mediation, as faith, repentance, and ſo on. The fourth conſiſts of *motive objects* of chriſtianity; ſo I venture to call the chriſtian doctrines of judgment, heaven, and hell, belief of which gives animation and energy to action. The laſt ſermon is recapitulatory, and proves, that variety is compatible with uniformity, yea, that uniformity neceſſarily produceth variety. When I call this volume, Sermons on the principal doctrines of chriſtianity, I mean to affirm, it contains a general view of the moſt obvious, and the leaſt diſputable articles of chriſtian theology, according to the notions of the French reformed churches.

I have only to add my ſincere prayers to the God of all grace, that he may enable us all to *put on* this *armour of God, that we may be able to withſtand in* this *evil day, and, having done all, to ſtand; for we wreſtle againſt* Eph. vi. 11. 13. 12.

the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places. May he grant, *that we henceforth be no more children, toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight of men, and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.* SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, *may we grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Chriſt, to whom* alone *be* DOMINION OVER CONSCIENCE *for ever and ever!* Amen.

Eph. iv. 14, 15.

Cheſterton,
July 10, 1777.

R. R.

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SERMON I.

The Sovereignty of JESUS CHRIST in the Church.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMON I.

The Sovereignty of JESUS CHRIST in the Church.

ROM. xiv. 7, 8.

None of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

THESE words are a general maxim, which S. Paul lays down for the deciſion of a particular controverſy. We cannot well enter into the apoſtle's meaning, unleſs we underſtand the particular ſubject, which led him to expreſs himſelf in this manner. Our firſt reflections, therefore, will tend to explain the ſubject; and afterward we will extend our meditations to greater objects. We will attend to the text in that point of view, in which thoſe chriſtians are moſt intereſted, who have repeatedly engaged to devote themſelves wholly to Jeſus Chriſt; to conſecrate to him through life, and to commit to him at death, not only with ſubmiſſion, but alſo with joy, thoſe ſouls, over which he hath acquired the nobleſt right. Thus ſhall we verify, in the moſt pure and elevated of all ſenſes, this ſaying of the Apoſtle; *none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.*

SERM. I. S. Paul propoſeth in the text, and in ſome of the preceding and following verſes, to eſtabliſh the rights of toleration. By toleration, we mean, that diſpoſition of a chriſtian, which, on a principle of benevolence, inclines him to hold communion with a man, who, thro' weakneſs of mind, mixeth with the truths of religion ſome errors, that are not entirely incompatible with it; and with the new teſtament worſhip ſome ceremonies, which are unſuitable to its elevation and ſimplicity, but which, however, do not deſtroy its eſſence.

Retain every part of this definition, for each is eſſential to the ſubject defined. I ſay that he, who exerciſeth toleration, acts on a principle of *benevolence*; for, were he to act on a principle of indolence, or of contempt for religion, his diſpoſition of mind, far from being a virtue worthy of praiſe, would be a vice fit only for execration. Toleration, I ſay, is to be exerciſed towards him only, who errs through *weakneſs of mind*; for he, who perſiſts in his error through arrogance, and for the ſake of rending the church, deſerves rigorous puniſhment. I ſay, farther, that he, who exerciſeth toleration, doth not confine himſelf to praying for him, who is the object of it, and to endeavouring to reclaim him, he proceeds farther, and *holds communion* with him; that is to ſay, he aſſiſts at the ſame religious exerciſes, and participates the Lord's-ſupper at the ſame table. Without this communion, can we conſider him, whom we pretend to tolerate, as a brother in the ſenſe of S. Paul? I add, finally, *erroneous ſentiments*, which are tolerated, *muſt be compatible with the great truths of religion*; *and obſervances*, which are tolerated, *muſt not deſtroy the eſſence of evangelical worſhip*, although they are incongruous with its ſimplicity and glory. How can I aſſiſt in a ſervice, which, in my opinion, is an inſult on the God, whom I adore? How can I approach the table of the Lord with a man, who rejects all the myſteries, which God exhibits there? and ſo of the reſt. Retain, then, all the parts of this definition, and ye will form a juſt notion of *toleration*.

This

This moderation, always neceſſary among Chriſtians, SERM. was particularly ſo in the primitive ages of chriſtianity. I. The firſt churches were compoſed of two ſorts of proſelytes; ſome of them were born of Jewiſh parents, and had been educated in Judaiſm, others were converted from paganiſm; and both, generally ſpeaking, after they had embraced chriſtianity, preſerved ſome traces of the religions, which they had renounced. Some of them retained ſcruples, from which juſt notions of chriſtian liberty, it ſhould ſeem, might have freed them. They durſt not eat ſome foods, which God gave for the nouriſhment of mankind, I mean, the fleſh of animals, and they ate only *herbs*. They ſet apart certain *days* for devotional exerciſes: not from that wiſe motive, which ought to engage every rational man to take a portion of his life from the tumult of the world, in order to conſecrate it to the ſervice of his creator; but from, I know not what notion of pre-eminence, which they attributed to ſome days above others. Thus far all are agreed in regard to the deſign of S. Paul in the text.

Nor is there any difficulty in determining which of the two orders of chriſtians, of whom we ſpoke, S. Paul conſiders as an object of toleration; whether that claſs, which came from the Gentiles, or that, which came from the Jews. It is plain, the laſt is intended. Every body knows, that the law of Moſes ordained a great number of feaſts under the penalty of the great anathema. It was very natural for the converted Jews to retain a fear of incurring that penalty, which followed the infraction of thoſe laws, and to carry their veneration for thoſe feſtivals too far.

There was one whole ſect among the Jews, that abſtained entirely from the fleſh of animals; they were the *Eſſenes*. Joſephus expreſsly affirms this; and Philo aſſures us, that their tables were free from every thing, that had blood, and were ſerved with only bread, ſalt, and hyſſop. As the Eſſenes profeſſed a ſeverity of manners,

SERM. I. manners, which had ſome likeneſs to the morality of Jeſus Chriſt, it is probable, that many of them embraced chriſtianity, and in it interwove a part of the peculiarities of their own ſect.

I do not think, however, that S. Paul had any particular view to the Eſſenes, at leaſt, we are not obliged to ſuppoſe, that his views were confined to them. All the world know, that Jews have an averſion to blood. A Jew, exact in his religion, does not eat fleſh now adays with chriſtians, leſt the latter ſhould not have taken ſufficient care to diſcharge the blood. When, therefore, S. Paul deſcribes converted Jews by their ſcrupuloſity in regard to the eating of blood, he does not ſpeak of what they did in their own families, but of what they practiſed, when they were invited to a convivial repaſt with people, who thought themſelves free from the prohibition of eating blood, whether they were gentiles yet involved in the darkneſs of paganiſm, or gentile converts to chriſtianity. Thus far our ſubject is free from difficulty.

The difficulty lies in the connection of the maxim in the text with the end, which S. Paul propoſeth in eſtabliſhing it. What relation is there between chriſtian toleration and this maxim? *None of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf?* How doth it follow from this principle, *whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord,* how doth it follow from this principle, that we ought to tolerate thoſe, who, through the weakneſs of their minds, mix ſome errors with the grand truths of chriſtianity, and with the new teſtament worſhip ſome ceremonies, which obſcure its ſimplicity, and debaſe its glory?

The ſolution lies in the connection of the text with the foregoing verſes, and particularly with the fourth verſe, *who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant?* To *judge* in this place does not ſignify to diſcern, but to *condemn.* The word has this meaning in a hundred paſſages of the new teſtament. I confine myſelf to one

paſſage

paſſage for example. *If we would judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged*; that is to ſay, if we would condemn ourſelves at the tribunal of repentance, after we have partaken unworthily of the Lord's ſupper, we ſhould not be condemned at the tribunal of divine juſtice. In like manner, *who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant?* is as much as to ſay, *who art thou that condemneſt?* S. Paul meant to make the chriſtians of Rome underſtand, that it belonged only to the ſovereign of the church to abſolve or to condemn, as he ſaw fit. SERM. I. 1 Cor. xi. 31.

But who is the ſupreme head of the church? Jeſus Chriſt; Jeſus Chriſt, who, with his Father, is *over all, God bleſſed for ever.* Jeſus Chriſt, by dying for the church, acquired this ſupremacy, and in virtue of it all true chriſtians render him the homage of adoration. All this is clearly expreſſed by our apoſtle, and gives us an occaſion to treat of the moſt abſtruſe points of chriſtian theology. Rom. ix. 5.

That Jeſus Chriſt is the ſupreme head of the church, according to the doctrine of S. Paul, is expreſſed by the apoſtle in the moſt clear and explicit manner; for after he hath ſaid, in the words of the text, *whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's*, he adds immediately, *for to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

That this Jeſus, *whoſe*, the apoſtle ſays, *we are*, is God, the apoſtle does not permit us to doubt; for he confounds the expreſſions *to eat to the Lord*, and *to give God thanks*; to *ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt*, and to *give account of himſelf to God*; to be *Lord both of the dead and living*, and this majeſtic language, which would be blaſphemy in the mouth of a ſimple creature, *As I live, ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God.* 6. 10. 12. 11.

Finally, That Jeſus Chriſt acquired that ſupremacy by his ſufferings and death, in virtue of which all true chriſtians render him the homage of adoration, the apoſtle eſtabliſheth, if poſſible, ſtill more clearly. This appears

SERM. I. 14. 8. 11. appears by the words juſt now cited, *to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.* To the ſame purpoſe the apoſtle ſpeaks in the epiſtle to the Philippians, *He became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* This is the ſovereignty, which Jeſus Chriſt acquired by dying for the church.

But the moſt remarkable, and at the ſame time the moſt difficult article on this ſubject, is this. Theſe texts, which ſeem to eſtabliſh the divinity of Chriſt in a manner ſo clear, furniſh the greateſt objection, that hath ever been propoſed againſt it. True, ſay the enemies of this doctrine, Jeſus Chriſt is God, ſince the ſcripture commands us to worſhip him. But his divinity is an acquired divinity; ſince that ſupremacy, which entitles him to adoration as God, is not an eſſential, but an acquired ſupremacy. Now, that this ſupremacy is acquired is indubitable, ſince the texts, that have been cited, expreſsly declare, that it is a fruit of his ſufferings and death. We have two arguments to offer in reply.

1. If it were demonſtrated, that the ſupremacy eſtabliſhed in the forecited texts was only acquired, and not eſſential, it would not therefore follow, that Jeſus Chriſt had no other ſupremacy belonging to him in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit. We are commanded to worſhip Jeſus Chriſt, not only becauſe he died for us, but alſo becauſe he is eternal and almighty, the author of all beings, that exiſt: and becauſe he hath all the perfections of deity; as we can prove by other paſſages, not neceſſary to be repeated here.

2. Nothing hinders that the true God, who, as the true

true God, merits our adoration, ſhould acquire every day new rights over us, in virtue of which we have new motives of rendering thoſe homages to him, which, we acknowledge, he always infinitely merited. Always when God beſtows a new bleſſing, he acquireth a new right. What was Jacob's opinion, when he made this vow? *If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, ſo that I come again to my father's houſe in peace: then ſhall the Lord be my God.* Did the patriarch mean, that he had no other reaſon for regarding the Lord as his God than this favour, which he aſked of him? No ſuch thing. He meant, that to a great many reaſons, which bound him to devote himſelf to God, the favour, which he aſked, would add a new one. It would be eaſy to produce a long liſt of examples of this kind. At preſent the application of this one ſhall ſuffice. Jeſus Chriſt, who, as ſupreme God hath natural rights over us, hath alſo acquired rights, becauſe he hath deigned to cloath himſelf with our fleſh, in which he died to redeem us. *None of us is his own*, we are all his, not only becauſe he is our creator, but becauſe he is alſo our redeemer. He hath a ſupremacy over us peculiar to himſelf, and diſtinct from that, which he hath in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

SERM. I.

Gen. xxviii. 20, &c.

To return, then, to our principal ſubject, from which this long digreſſion hath diverted us. This Jeſus, who is the ſupreme head of the church; this Jeſus, to whom all the members of the church are ſubject; willeth that we ſhould tolerate, and he his ſelf hath tolerated, thoſe, who, having in other caſes an upright conſcience, and a ſincere intention of ſubmitting their reaſon to all his deciſions, and their hearts to all his commands, cannot clearly ſee, that chriſtian liberty includes a freedom from the obſervation of certain feaſts, and from the diſtinction of certain foods. If the ſovereign of the church tolerate them, who err in this manner, by what right do ye, who are only ſimple ſub-

SERM. I. jects, undertake to condemn them? *Who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth. For none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. Let us not therefore judge one another any more.* Let us, *who are ſtrong, bear the infirmities of the weak.*

This is the deſign of S. Paul in the words of my text, in ſome of the preceding, and in ſome of the following, verſes. Can we proceed without remarking, or without lamenting, the blindneſs of thoſe chriſtians, who, by their intolerance to their brethren, ſeem to have choſen for their model thoſe members of the church of Rome, who violate the rights of toleration in the moſt cruel manner? We are not ſpeaking of thoſe ſanguinary men, who aim at illuminating peoples minds with the light of fires, and faggots, which they kindle againſt all, who reject their ſyſtems. Our tears, and our blood, have not aſſwaged their rage, how can we then think to appeaſe it by our exhortations? Let us not ſollicit the wrath of heaven againſt theſe perſecutors of the church; let us leave to the ſouls of them,
Rev. vi. 10 who were ſlain for the word of God, to cry, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them, that dwell on the earth?*

But, ye inteſtine diviſions! Thou ſpirit of faction! Ye theological wars! how long will ye be let looſe among us? Is it poſſible, that chriſtians, who bear the name of reformed, chriſtians united by the bond of their faith in the belief of the ſame doctrines, and, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, chriſtians united by the very efforts of their enemies to deſtroy them; can they violate, after all, thoſe laws of toleration, which they have ſo often preſcribed to others, and againſt the violation of which they have remonſtrated with ſo much wiſdom and ſucceſs? Can they convoke eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies, can they draw up canons, can they denounce

denounce excommunications and anathemas againſt thoſe, who, retaining with themſelves the leading truths of chriſtianity and of the reformation, think differently on points of ſimple ſpeculation, on queſtions purely metaphyſical, and, if I may ſpeak the whole, on matters ſo abſtruſe, that they are alike indeterminable by them, who exclude members from the communion of Jeſus Chriſt, and by thoſe who are excluded? O ye ſons of the reformation! how long will ye counteract your own principles! how long will ye take pleaſure in increaſing the number of thoſe, who breathe only your deſtruction, and move only to deſtroy you! O ye ſubjects of the ſovereign of the church! how long will ye incroach on the rights of your ſovereign, dare to condemn thoſe whom he abſolves, and to reject thoſe, whom his generous benevolence tolerates! *Who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant? for none of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.* SERM. I.

What we have ſaid ſhall ſuffice for the ſubject, which occaſioned the maxim in the text. The remaining time I devote to the conſideration of the general ſenſe of this maxim. It lays before us the condition, the engagements, the inclination, and the felicity of a chriſtian. What is the felicity of a chriſtian, what is his inclination, what are his engagements, what is his condition? They are *not to be his own:* but to ſay, *whether I live, or die, I am the Lord's.* The whole, that we ſhall propoſe to you, is contained in theſe four articles.

I. The text lays before us the primitive *condition* of a chriſtian. It is a condition of *dependence. None of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf.*

None of us *liveth* to himſelf, *for whether we live, we live unto the Lord.* What do we poſſeſs, during our abode upon earth, which doth not abſolutely de-

SERM. I. pend on him, who placed us here? Our exiſtence is not ours; our fortune is not ours; our reputation is not ours; our virtue is not ours; our reaſon is not ours; our health is not ours; our life is not ours.

Our *exiſtence* is not ours. A few years ago we found ourſelves in this world, conſtituting a very inconſiderable part of it. A few years ago the world itſelf was nothing. The will of God alone hath made a being of this nothing, as he can make this being a nothing, whenever he pleaſeth to do ſo.

Our *fortune* is not ours. The moſt opulent perſons often ſee their *riches make themſelves wings, and fly away.* Houſes, the beſt eſtabliſhed, diſappear in an inſtant. We have ſeen a Job, who had poſſeſſed *ſeven thouſand ſheep, three thouſand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and ſervants without number*; we have ſeen the man, who had been *the greateſt of all the men of the eaſt*, lying on a dunghill, retaining nothing of his proſperity but a ſorrowful remembrance, which aggravated the adverſities that followed it.

Our *reputation* is not ours. One ſingle frailty ſometimes tarniſheth a life of the moſt unſullied beauty. One moment's abſence ſometimes debaſeth the glory of the moſt profound politician, of the moſt expert general, of a ſaint of the higheſt order. A very diminutive fault will ſerve to render contemptible, yea infamous, the man, who committed it; and to make him tremble at the thought of appearing before men, who have no other advantage over him than that of having committed the ſame offence more fortunately; I mean, of having concealed the commiſſion of it from the eyes of his fellow-creatures.

Our *virtue* is not ours. Want of opportunity is often the cauſe why one, who openly profeſſeth chriſtianity, is not an apoſtate; another an adulterer; another a murderer.

Our *reaſon* is not ours. While we poſſeſs it, we are ſubject to diſtractions, to abſence of thought, to ſuſpenſion

penſion of intelligence, which render us entirely incapable of reflection; and, what is ſtill more mortifying to human nature, they, whoſe geniuſes are the moſt tranſcendent and ſublime, ſometimes become either melancholly or mad; like Nebuchadnezzar they ſink into beaſts, and browſe like them on the herbage of the field. SERM. I.

Our *health* is not ours. The catalogue of thoſe infirmities, which deſtroy it, (I ſpeak of thoſe, which we know, and which mankind by a ſtudy of five or ſix thouſand years have diſcovered.) makes whole volumes. A catalogue of thoſe, which are unknown, would probably make larger volumes yet.

Our *life* is not ours. Winds, waves, heat, cold, aliments, vegetables, animals, nature, and each of its component parts, conſpire to deprive us of it. Not one of thoſe, who have entered this church, can demonſtrate that he ſhall go out of it alive. Not one of thoſe, who compoſe this aſſembly, even of the youngeſt and ſtrongeſt, can aſſure himſelf of one year, one day, one hour, one moment of life. *None of us liveth to himſelf*; for, *if we live, we are the Lord's.*

Farther, *No man dieth to himſelf. If we die, we are the Lord's.* How abſolute ſoever the dominion of one man over another may be, there is a moment, in which both are on a level; that moment comes when we die. Death delivers a ſlave from the power of a tyrant, under whoſe rigour he hath ſpent his life in groans. Death terminates all the relations, that ſubſiſt between men in this life. But the relation of dependence, which ſubſiſts between the Creator and his creatures, is an eternal relation. That world, into which we enter when we die, is a part of his empire, and is as ſubject to his laws as that into which we entered when we were born. During this life, the Supreme Governor hath riches and poverty, glory and ignominy, cruel tyrants and clement princes, rains and droughts, raging tempeſts and refreſhing breezes,

air

SERM. I. air wholeſome and air infected, famine and plenty, victories and defeats, to render us happy or miſerable. After death, he hath abſolution and condemnation, a tribunal of juſtice and a tribunal of mercy, angels and devils, *a river of pleaſure* and *a lake burning with fire and brimſtone*, hell with its horrors and heaven with its happineſs, to render us happy or miſerable as he pleaſeth.

Theſe reflections are not quite ſufficient to make us feel all our *dependence*. Our vanity is mortified, when we remember, that what we enjoy is not ours: but it is ſometimes, as it were, indemnified by obſerving the great means, that God employs to deprive us of our enjoyments. God hath, in general, excluded this extravagant motive to pride. He hath attached our felicity to one fibre, to one caprice, to one grain of ſand, to objects the leaſt likely, and ſeemingly the leaſt capable, of influencing our deſtiny.

On what is your high idea of yourſelf founded? On your genius? And what is neceſſary to reduce the fineſt genius to that ſtate of melancholly or madneſs, of which I juſt now ſpoke? Muſt the earth quake? Muſt the ſea overflow its banks? Muſt the heavens kindle into lightning and reſound in thunder? Muſt the elements claſh, and the powers of nature be ſhaken? No; there needs nothing but the diſplacing of one little fibre in your brain!

On what is your high idea of yourſelf founded? On that ſelf-complacence, which fortune, rank, and pleaſing objects, that ſurround you, ſeem to contribute to excite? And what is neceſſary to diſſipate your ſelf-complacence? Muſt the earth tremble? Muſt the the ſea overflow its banks? Muſt heaven arm itſelf with thunder and lightning? Muſt all nature be ſhaken? No; one caprice is ſufficient. An appearance, under which an object preſents itſelf to us, or rather, a colour, that our imagination lends it, baniſheth ſelf-complacence,

placence, and, lo! the man juſt now agitated with ſo much joy is fixed in a black, a deep deſpair! SERM. I.

On what is your lofty idea of yourſelf founded? On your health? But what is neceſſary to deprive you of your health? Earthquakes? Armies? Inundations? Muſt nature return to its chaotic ſtate? No; one grain of ſand is ſufficient! That grain of ſand, which in another poſition was next to nothing to you, and was really nothing to your felicity, becomes in its preſent poſition a puniſhment, a martyrdom, a hell!

People ſometimes ſpeculate the nature of thoſe torments, which divine juſtice reſerves for the wicked. They are leſs concerned to avoid the pains of hell, than to diſcover wherein they conſiſt. They enquire, what fuel can ſupply a fire, that will never be extinguiſhed. Vain reſearches! The principle in my text is ſufficient to give me frightful ideas of hell. We are in a ſtate of entire *dependence* on the Supreme Being; and, to repeat it again, one ſingle grain of ſand, which is nothing in itſelf, may become, in the hands of the Supreme Being, a puniſhment, a martyrdom, a hell in regard to us. What *dependence! Whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's.* This is the primitive *condition* of a chriſtian.

II. Our text points out the *engagements* of a chriſtian. Let us abridge our reflections. Remark the ſtate in which Jeſus Chriſt found us; what he performed to deliver us from it; and under what conditions we enter on and enjoy this deliverance.

1. In what *ſtate* did Jeſus Chriſt find us, when he came into our world? I am ſorry to ſay, the affected delicacy of the world, which increaſeth as its irregularities multiply, obligeth me to ſuppreſs part of a metaphorical deſcription, that the Holy Spirit hath given us in the ſixteenth chapter of Ezekiel. *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite,* ſaith he to the church. *When thou waſt born no eye pitied thee, to do any thing unto thee: but thou waſt caſt out in the* ver. 3, &c.

open

SERM. I. *open air, to the lothing of thy perſon, in the day that thou waſt born. I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee polluted in thine own blood, and I ſaid unto thee, when thou waſt in thy blood, Live. I ſpread my ſkirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea I ſware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine.*

Let us leave the metaphor, and let us confine our attention to the meaning. When Jeſus Chriſt came into the world, in what ſtate did he find us? Deſcended from a long train of anceſtors in rebellion againſt the laws of God, fluctuating in our ideas, ignorant of our origin and end, blinded by our prejudices, infatuated
Eph. ii. 12. by our paſſions, *having no hope, and being without God in the world*, condemned to die, and reſerved for eternal flames. From this ſtate Jeſus Chriſt delivered us,
Rom. viii. 21. and brought us into *the glorious liberty of the ſons of God*, in order to enable us to participate the felicity of
2 Pet. i. 4. the bleſſed God, by making us *partakers of the divine nature*. By a deliverance ſo glorious, doth not the deliverer obtain peculiar rights over us?

Remark, farther, on what *conditions* Jeſus Chriſt hath freed you from your miſeries, and ye will perceive, that *ye are not your own*. What means the morality that Jeſus Chriſt enjoined in his goſpel? What vows were made for each of you at your baptiſm? What haſt thou promiſed at the Lord's table? In one word, To what authority didſt thou ſubmit by embracing the goſpel? Didſt thou ſay to Jeſus Chriſt, Lord! I will be partly thine, and partly mine own? To thee I will ſubmit the opinions of my mind: but the irregular diſpoſitions of my heart I will reſerve to myſelf. I will conſent to renounce my vengeance: but thou ſhalt allow me to retain my Dalilah and my Druſilla. For thee I will quit the world and diſſipating pleaſures: but thou ſhalt indulge the viſionary and capricious flow of my humour. On a chriſtian feſtival I will riſe into tranſports of devotion; my countenance ſhall emit rays of a divine flame; my eyes

eyes ſhall ſparkle with ſeraphic fire, *my heart and my* SERM.
fleſh ſhall cry out for the living God: but when I return I.
to the world, I will ſink into the ſpirit of the men of Pſ. lxxxiv.
it; I will adopt their maxims, ſhare their pleaſures, 2.
immerſe myſelf in their converſation; and thus I will
be alternately *cold and hot*, a chriſtian and a heathen, Rev. iii.
an angel and a devil. Is this your idea of chriſtianity? 15.
Undoubtedly, it is that, which many of our hearers
have formed; and which they take too much pains to
prove, by the whole courſe of their converſation. But
this is not the idea which the inſpired writers have
given us of chriſtianity; it is not that, which, after
their example, we have given you. Him only I ac-
knowledge for a true chriſtian, who is *not his own*; at
leaſt, who continually endeavours to eradicate the remains
of ſin, that reſiſt the empire of Jeſus Chriſt. Him alone
I acknowledge for a true chriſtian, who can ſay with
S. Paul, although not in the ſame degree, yet with
equal ſincerity, *I am crucified with Chriſt; nevertheleſs*
I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life, Gal. ii. 20.
which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the
Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.

Conſider, thirdly, what it coſt Jeſus Chriſt to deli-
ver you from your wretched ſtate. Could our freedom
have been procured by a few emotions of benevolence,
or by an act of ſupreme power? In order to deliver us
from our *griefs*, it was neceſſary for him to *bear* them; Iſa. liii. 4.
to terminate our *ſorrows* he muſt *carry* them, (according
to the language of a prophet.) to deliver us from the ſtrokes
of divine juſtice he muſt be *ſtricken and ſmitten of God.* I
am aware, that one of the moſt deplorable infirmities
of the human mind is to become inſenſible to the
moſt affecting objects by becoming familiar with them.
The glorified ſaints, we know, by contemplating the
ſufferings of the Saviour of the world, behold objects,
that excite eternal adorations of the mercy of *him, who* Rev. i. 5, 6.
loved them, and waſhed them from their ſins in his own
blood, and made them kings, and prieſts unto God his Fa-

SERM. I. *ther*; but in our preſent ſtate the propoſing of theſe objects to us in a courſe of ſermons is ſufficient to weary us. However, I affirm, that, if we have not been affected with what Jeſus Chriſt hath done for our ſalvation, it hath not been owing to our thinking too much, but to our not thinking enough, and perhaps to our having never thought of the ſubject once, with ſuch a profound attention as its intereſting nature demands.

Bow thyſelf towards the myſtical ark, chriſtian! and fix thine eyes on the mercy-ſeat. Revolve in thy meditation the aſtoniſhing, I had almoſt ſaid, the incredible hiſtory of thy Saviour's love. Go to Bethlehem, and behold him, *who upholdeth all things by the word of his power*; (I uſe the language of an apoſtle.) him, who thought it no uſurpation of the rights of the deity to be *equal with God*; behold him *humbling himſelf*, (I uſe here the words of S. Paul. His words are more emphatical ſtill.) Behold him *annihilated*;* for, although the child, who was born in a ſtable, and laid in a manger, was a real being, yet he may ſeem to be *annihilated* in regard to the degrading circumſtances, which vailed and concealed his natural dignity: behold him *annihilated* by *taking upon him the form of a ſervant*. Follow him through the whole courſe of his life; *he went about doing good*, and expoſed himſelf in every place to inconveniencies and miſeries, through the abundance of his benevolence and love. Paſs to Gethſemane; behold his agony; ſee him as the redeemer of mankind contending with the Judge of the whole earth; an agony, in which Jeſus reſiſted with only *prayers and ſupplications, ſtrong crying and tears*; an agony, preparatory to an event ſtill more terrible, the bare idea of which terrified and troubled him, made *his ſweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground*, and produced

Heb. i. 3. Phil. ii. 6. Acts x. 38. Heb. v. 7. Luke xxii. 44.

* Videtur hic alludere ad Dan. ix. 26. Ubi dicitur Meſſias exinaniendus, ut ei nihil ſuperſit, i. e. quaſi in nihilum ſit redigendus. *Poli Synops.* in loc.

produced this prayer ſo fruitful in controverſies in the ſchools, and ſo penetrating and affecting, ſo fruitful in motives to obedience, devotion, and gratitude, in truly chriſtian hearts, *O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Go farther yet, Chriſtian! and, after thou haſt ſeen all the ſufferings, which Jeſus Chriſt endured in going from the garden to the croſs, aſcend Calvary with him; ſtop on the ſummit of the hill, and on that theatre behold the moſt aſtoniſhing of all the works of almighty God. See this Jeſus, *the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*; ſee him ſtripped, faſtened to an accurſed tree, confounded with two thieves, nailed to the wood, ſurrounded with executioners and tormentors, having loſt, during this dreadful period, that ſight of the comfortable preſence of his Father, which conſtituted all his joy, and being driven to exclaim, *My God! My God! why haſt thou forſaken me?* But, behold him, amidſt all theſe painful ſufferings, firmly ſupporting his patience by his love; reſolutely enduring all theſe puniſhments from thoſe motives of benevolence, which firſt engaged him to ſubmit to them; ever occupied with the proſpect of ſaving thoſe poor mortals, for whoſe ſake he deſcended into this world; fixing his eyes on the world of believers, which his croſs would ſubdue to his government, according to his own ſaying, *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* Can we help feeling the force of that motive, which the ſcripture propoſeth in ſo many places, and ſo very emphatically in theſe words, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, that is to ſay, engageth and attacheth us cloſely to him; *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they, which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.* Yea, *The love of Chriſt forceth us*, when we think what he hath done for us.

SERM. I.

Mat. xxvi. 44.

Heb. i. 3.

Mat. xxvii. 46.

John xii. 32.

2 Cor. v. 14.

SERM. I. III. My third article, which ſhould treat of *the inclination* of a chriſtian, is naturally contained in the ſecond, that is, in that which treats of his *engagements*. To devote ourſelves to a maſter, who hath carried his love to us ſo far; to devote ourſelves to him by fear and force; to ſubmit to his laws, becauſe he hath the power of precipitating thoſe into hell, who have the audacity to break them; to obey him on this principle only, this is a diſpoſition of mind as deteſtable as diſobedience itſelf, as hateful as open rebellion. The ſame arguments, which prove that a chriſtian is *not his own* by engagement, prove that he is *not his own* by inclination. When, therefore, we ſhall have proved that this ſtate is his *felicity* alſo, we ſhall have finiſhed the plan of this diſcourſe.

IV. Can it be difficult to perſuade you on this article? Stretch your imaginations. Find, if ye can, any circumſtance in life, in which it would be happier to reject chriſtianity than to ſubmit to it.

Amidſt all the diſorders and confuſions, and (ſo to ſpeak.) amidſt the univerſal chaos of the preſent world, it is delightful to belong to the governor, who firſt formed the world, and who hath aſſured us, that he will diſplay the ſame power in renewing it, which he diſplayed in creating it.

In the calamities of life, it is delightful to belong to the maſter, who diſtributes them; who diſtributes them only for our good; who knows afflictions by experience; whoſe love inclines him to terminate our ſufferings; and who continues them from the ſame principle of love, that inclines him to terminate them, when we ſhall have derived thoſe advantages from them, for which they were ſent.

During the perſecutions of the church, it is delightful to belong to a guardian, who can curb our perſecutors, and controul every tyrant; who uſeth them for the execution of his own counſels; and who will break them

them in pieces with a rod of iron, when they can no longer contribute to the ſanctifying of his ſervants. SERM. I.

Under a ſenſe of our infirmities; when we are terrified with the purity of that morality, the equity of which we are obliged to own, even while we tremble at its ſeverity; it is delightful to belong to a judge, who doth not exact his rights with the utmoſt rigour; who *knoweth our frame*; who pitieth our infirmities; and who aſſureth us, that *he will not break a bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax.* Pſal. ciii. 14. Mat. xii. 20.

When our paſſions are intoxicated, in thoſe fatal moments, in which the deſire of poſſeſſing the objects of our paſſions wholly occupies our hearts, and we conſider them as our paradiſe, our Gods; it is delightful, however incapable we may be of attending to it, to belong to a Lord, who reſtrains and controuls us, becauſe he loves us; and who refuſeth to grant us what we ſo eagerly deſire, becauſe he would either preclude thoſe terrible regrets, which penitents feel after the commiſſion of great ſins, or thoſe more terrible torments, that are inſeparable from final impenitence.

Under a recollection of our rebellions, it is delightful to belong to a parent, who will receive us favourably when we implore his clemency; who ſweetens the bitterneſs of our remorſe; who is touched with our regrets; who wipes away the tears, that the remembrance of our backſlidings makes us ſhed; who *ſpareth us, as a man ſpareth his own ſon, that ſerveth him.* Mal. iii. 17.

In that empty void, into which we are often conducted, while we ſeem to enjoy the moſt ſolid eſtabliſhments, the moſt exquiſite pleaſures, and the moſt brilliant honours; it is delightful to belong to a patron, who reſerves for us objects far better ſuited to our original excellence, and to the immenſity of our deſires. *To live to Jeſus Chriſt* then, is the *felicity* of a chriſtian.

But, if it be a felicity to belong to Jeſus Chriſt while we *live*, it is a felicity incomparably greater to belong to him when we *die*. We will conclude this meditation

SERM. I. meditation with this article, and it is an article, that I would endeavour above all others to impreſs on your hearts, and to engage you to take home to your houſes. But, unhappily, the ſubject of this article is one of thoſe, which generally make the leaſt impreſſions on the minds of chriſtians. I know a great many chriſtians, who place their happineſs in *living to Jeſus Chriſt*; but how few have love enough for him to eſteem it a felicity to *die to him!* Not only is the number of thoſe ſmall, who experience ſuch a degree of love to Chriſt; there are very few, who even comprehend what we mean on this ſubject. Some efforts of divine love reſemble very accurate and refined reaſonings. They ought naturally to be the moſt intelligible to intelligent creatures, and they are generally the leaſt underſtood. Few people are capable of that attention, which takes the mind from every thing foreign from the object in contemplation, and fixeth it not only on the ſubject, but alſo on that part, on that point of it, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, which is to be inveſtigated and explained; ſo that, by a frailty, which mankind cannot ſufficiently deplore, preciſion confuſeth our ideas, and light itſelf makes a ſubject dark. In like manner, there are ſome efforts of divine love, ſo detached from ſenſe, ſo free from all ſenſible objects, ſo ſuperior to even all the means, that religion uſeth to attract us to God, ſo eagerly aſpiring after an union more cloſe, more noble, and more tender, that the greateſt part of chriſtians, as I ſaid before, are not only incapable of experiencing them, but they are alſo hard to be perſuaded, that there is any reality in what they have been told about them.

To be Jeſus Chriſt's in the hour of death by *condition*, by *engagement*, and above all by *inclination*, are the only means of dying with delight. Without theſe, whatever makes our felicity while we live will become our puniſhment when we die; whether it be a criminal object, or an innocent object, or even an object, which God himſelf commandeth us to love.

Criminal

Criminal objects will puniſh you. They will repreſent death to you as the meſſenger of an avenging God, who comes to drag you before a tribunal, where the judge will examine and puniſh all your crimes. *Lawful* objects will diſtreſs you. Pleaſant fields! convenient houſes! we muſt forſake you. Natural relations! agreeable companions! faithful friends! we muſt give you up. From you, our dear children! who kindle in our hearts a kind of love, that agitates and inflames beings, when nature ſeems to render them incapable of heat and motion, we muſt be torn from you. SERM. I.

Religious objects, which we are commanded above all others to love, will contribute to our anguiſh in a dying bed, if they have confined our love, and rendered us too ſenſible to that kind of happineſs, which piety procures in this world; and if they have prevented our ſouls from riſing into a contemplation of that bleſſed ſtate, in which there will be no more temple, no more ſacraments, no more groſs and ſenſible worſhip. The man, who is too much attached to theſe things, is confounded at the hour of death. The land of love, to which he goes, is an unknown country to him; and, as the borders of it, on which he ſtands, and on which alone his eyes are fixed, preſent only precipices to his view, fear and trembling ſurround his every ſtep.

But a believer, who loves Jeſus Chriſt with that kind of love, which made S. Paul exclaim, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, finds himſelf on the ſummit of his wiſhes at the approach of death. This believer, living in this world, reſembles the ſon of a great king, whom ſome ſad event tore from his royal parent in his cradle; who knows his parent only by the fame of his virtues; who has always a difficult, and often an intercepted correſpondence with his parent; whoſe remittances, and favours from his parent are always diminiſhed by the hands through which they come to him. With 2 Cor. v. 14.

what

SERM. I. what tranſport would ſuch a ſon meet the moment appointed by his father for his return to his natural ſtate! I belong to God, (theſe are the ſentiments of the believer, of whom I am ſpeaking.) I belong to God, not only by his ſovereign dominion over me as a creature; not only by that right, which, as a maſter, who hath redeemed his ſlave, he hath acquired over me: but I belong to God, becauſe I love him, and becauſe, I know, God alone deſerves my higheſt eſteem. The deep impreſſions, that his adorable perfections have made on my mind, make me impatient with every object, which intercepts my ſight of him. I could not be content to abide any longer in this world, were he not to ordain my ſtay; and were I not to conſider his will as the only law of my conduct. But the law, that commands me to live, doth not forbid me to deſire to die. I conſider death as the period fixed for the gratifying of my moſt ardent wiſhes, the conſummation of my higheſt joy. *Whilſt I am at home in the body, I am abſent from the Lord.* But it would be incomparably more delightful *to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* And what can detain me on earth, when God ſhall condeſcend to call me to himſelf?

2 Cor. v. 6. 8.

Not ye *criminal* objects! you I never loved; and although I have ſometimes ſuffered myſelf to be ſeduced by your deceitful appearances of pleaſure, yet I have been ſo ſeverely puniſhed by the tears, that ye have cauſed me to ſhed, and by the remorſe, which ye have occaſioned my conſcience to feel, that there is no reaſon to fear my putting you into the plan of my felicity.

Nor ſhall ye detain me, *lawful* objects! How ſtrong ſoever the attachments, that unite me to you, may be, ye are only ſtreams of happineſs, and I am going to the fountain of felicity. Ye are only emanations of happineſs, and I am going to *the happy God.*

Neither ſhall ye, *religious* objects! detain me. Ye are only means, and death is going to conduct me to the

the end; ye are only the road, to die is to arrive at home. True, I ſhall no more read thoſe excellent works, in which authors of the brighteſt genius have raiſed the truth from depths of darkneſs and prejudice, in which it had been buried, and placed it in the moſt lively point of view. I ſhall hear no more of thoſe ſermons, in which the preacher, animated by the holy ſpirit of God, attempts to elevate me above the preſent world: but I ſhall hear, and contemplate eternal wiſdom, and I ſhall diſcover in my commerce with it the views, the deſigns, the plans of my creator; and I ſhall acquire more wiſdom in one moment by this mean than I ſhould ever obtain by hearing the beſt compoſed ſermons, and by reading the beſt written books. True, I ſhall no more devote myſelf to you, cloſet exerciſes! holy meditations! aſpirings of a ſoul in ſearch of its God! crying, *Lord, I beſeech thee ſhew me thy glory!* Lord diſſipate the dark thick cloud, that conceals thee from my ſight! ſuffer me to approach that light, which hath hitherto been inacceſſible to me! But death is the diſſipation of clouds and darkneſs; it is an approach to perfect light; it takes me from my cloſet, and preſents me like a ſeraphim at the foot of the throne of God and the lamb. SERM. I. Exod. xxxiii. 18.

True, I ſhall no more partake of you, ye holy ordinances of religion! ye ſacred ceremonies! that have conveyed ſo many conſolations into my ſoul; that have ſo amply afforded ſolidity and ſolace to the ties, which united my heart to my God; that have ſo often procured me a heaven on earth: but I quit you becauſe I am going to receive immediately effuſions of divine love, pleaſures at God's right hand for evermore, *fulneſs of joy in his preſence*; I quit you becauſe . . . . . Pſal. xvi. 11.

. . . . . .

Alas! your hearts perhaps have eſcaped me, my brethren! perhaps theſe emotions, ſuperior to your piety, are no longer the ſubject of your attention. I have, however, no other direction to give you, than

SERM. I. that, which may ſtand for an abridgement of this diſcourſe, of all my other preaching, and of my whole miniſtry; Love God; be the Lord's by *inclination*, as ye are his by *condition*, and by *engagement*. Then, the miſeries of this life will be tolerable, and the approach of death delightful. God grant his bleſſing on the word! to him be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON II.

The EQUALITY of Mankind.

SERMON II.

The Equality of Mankind.

SERMON II.

The Equality of Mankind.

PROVERBS xxii. 2.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is *the maker of them all.*

AMONG the various diſpenſations of providence, that regard mankind, one of the moſt advantageous in the original deſign of the creator, and at the ſame time one of the moſt fatal through our abuſe of it, is the diverſity of our conditions. How could men have formed one ſocial body, if all conditions had been equal? Had all poſſeſſed the ſame rank, the ſame opulence, the ſame power, how could they have relieved one another from the inconveniencies, which would have continually attended each of them? Variety of conditions renders men neceſſary to each other. The governor is neceſſary to the people, the people are neceſſary to the governor; wiſe ſtateſmen are neceſſary to a powerful ſoldiery, a powerful ſoldiery is neceſſary to wiſe ſtateſmen. A ſenſe of this neceſſity is the ſtrongeſt bond of union, and this it is, which inclines one to aſſiſt another in hopes of receiving aſſiſtance in his turn.

But if this diverſity be connected with the higheſt utility to mankind in the original deſign of the creator,

it

SERM. II. it is become, we muſt allow, productive of fatal evils through our abuſe of it. On the one hand, they, whoſe condition is the moſt brilliant, are dazzled with their own brightneſs; they ſtudy the articles, which elevate them above their fellow-creatures, and they chooſe to be ignorant of every thing, that puts themſelves on a level with them; they perſuade themſelves, that they are beings incomparable, far more noble and excellent than thoſe vile mortals, on whom they proudly tread, and on whom they ſcarcely deign to caſt a haughty eye. Hence provoking arrogance, cruel reſerve, and tyrannical deſpotiſm. On the other hand, they, who are placed in inferior ſtations, proſtrate their imaginations before theſe beings, whom they treat rather as gods than men; them they conſtitute arbiters of right and wrong, true and falſe; they forget, while they reſpect the rank, which the ſupreme governor of the world hath given to their ſuperiors, to maintain a ſenſe of their own excellence. Hence come ſoft compliances, baſe ſubmiſſions of reaſon and conſcience, ſlavery the moſt willing and abject to the high demands of theſe phantoms of grandeur, theſe imaginary gods.

To rectify theſe different ideas, to humble the one claſs, and to exalt the other, it is neceſſary to ſhew men in their true point of view; to convince them that diverſity of condition, which God hath been pleaſed to eſtabliſh among them, is perfectly conſiſtent with equality; that the ſplendid condition of the firſt, includes nothing, that favours their ideas of ſelf-preference; and that there is nothing in the low condition of the laſt, which deprives them of their real dignity, or debaſes their intelligences formed in the image of God. I deſign to diſcuſs this ſubject to-day. The men, who compoſe this audience, and among whom providence hath very unequally divided the bleſſings of this life; princes, who command, and to whom God hiſſelf hath given authority to command ſubjects; ſubjects, who obey, and on whom God hath impoſed obedience as a duty; the rich,

rich, who give alms, and the poor, who receive them; SERM.
all, all my hearers, I am going to reduce to their na- II.
tural equality, and to conſider this equality as a ſource of piety. This is the meaning of the wiſe man in the words of the text, *The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.*

Let us enter into the matter. We ſuppoſe two truths, and do not attempt to prove them. Firſt, that, although the wiſe man mentions here only two different ſtates, yet he includes all. Under the general notion of *rich* and *poor*, we think, he comprehends every thing, that makes any ſenſible difference in the conditions of mankind. Accordingly, it is an inconteſtible truth, that what he ſays of the *rich and poor* may be ſaid of the nobleman and plebeian, of the maſter and the ſervant. It may be ſaid, the maſter and the ſervant, the nobleman and the plebeian *meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all:* and ſo of the reſt.

It is not unlikely, however, that Solomon, when he ſpoke of *the rich and poor*, had a particular deſign in chooſing this kind of diverſity of condition to illuſtrate his meaning in preference to every other. Although I can hardly conceive, that there ever was a period of time, in which the love of riches did faſcinate the eyes of mankind, as it does in this age; yet it is very credible, that in Solomon's time, as in ours, riches made the grand difference among men. Strictly ſpeaking, there are now only two conditions of mankind, that of the rich, and that of the poor. Riches decide all, yea thoſe qualities, which ſeem to have no concern with them, I mean, mental qualifications. Find but the art of amaſſing money, and you will thereby find that of uniting in your own perſon, all the advantages, of which mankind have entertained the higheſt ideas. How mean ſoever your birth may have been, you will poſſeſs the art of concealing it, and you may form an alliance with the moſt illuſtrious families; how ſmall

ſoever

SERM. II. ſoever your knowledge may be, you may paſs for a ſuperior genius, capable of deciding queſtions the moſt intricate, points the moſt abſtruſe; and, what is ſtill more deplorable, you may purchaſe with ſilver and gold a kind of honour and virtue, while you remain the moſt abandoned of mankind, at leaſt, your money will attract that reſpect, which is due to nothing but honour and virtue.

The ſecond truth, which we ſuppoſe, is, that this propoſition, *the Lord is the maker of them all*, is one of thoſe conciſe, I had almoſt ſaid, one of thoſe defective propoſitions, which a judicious auditor ought to fill up in order to give it a proper meaning. This ſtyle is very common in our ſcriptures; it is peculiarly proper in ſententious works, ſuch as this, out of which we have taken the text. The deſign of Solomon is to teach us, that whatever diverſities of conditions there may be in ſociety, the men, who compoſe it, are *eſſentially equal*. The reaſon, that he aſſigns, is, *the Lord is the maker of them all*. If this idea be not added, the propoſition proves nothing at all. It does not follow, becauſe the ſame God is the *creator* of two beings, that there is any reſemblance between them, much leſs that they are equal. Is not God the creator of pure unembodied intelligences, who have faculties ſuperior to thoſe of mankind? Is not God the author of their exiſtence as well as of ours? Becauſe *God is the creator of both*, does it follow that both are equal? God is no leſs the creator of the organs of an ant, than he is the creator of the ſublime geniuſſes of a part of mankind. Becauſe God hath created an ant and a ſublime genius, does it follow, that theſe two beings are equal? The meaning of the words of Solomon depends then on what a prudent reader ſupplies. We may judge what ought to be ſupplied by the nature of the ſubject, and by a parallel paſſage in the book of Job. *Did not he, that made me in the womb, make my ſervant? and did he*

xxxi. 15.

not

*not faſhion us alike?** To the words of our text, therefore, *The Lord is the maker of them all*, we muſt add, *the Lord hath faſhioned them all alike.* Nothing but groſs ignorance, or wilful treachery, can incline an expoſitor to abuſe this liberty of making up the ſenſe of a paſſage, and induce him to conclude, that he may add to a text whatever may ſeem to him the moſt proper to ſupport a favourite opinion, or to cover an unworthy paſſion. When we are inquiſitive for truth, it is eaſy to diſcover the paſſages of holy ſcripture, in which the authors have made uſe of theſe conciſe imperfect ſentences. SERM. II.

Of this kind are all paſſages, which excite no diſtinct ideas, or which excite ideas foreign from the ſcope of the writer, unleſs the meaning be ſupplied. For example, we read theſe words in the eleventh chapter of S. Paul's ſecond epiſtle to the Corinthians, *If he, that cometh, preacheth another Jeſus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another ſpirit, which ye have not received, or another goſpel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.* If we attach ſuch ideas to theſe words, as they ſeem at firſt to excite, we ſhall take them in a ſenſe quite oppoſite to the meaning of S. Paul. The apoſtle aimed to make the Corinthians reſpect his miniſtry, and to conſider his apoſtleſhip as confirmed of God in a manner as clear and deciſive as that of any miniſter, who had preached to them. Is the propoſition, that we have read, any thing to this purpoſe, unleſs we ſupply what is not expreſſed? But if we ſupply what is underſtood, and add theſe words, *but this is incredible*, or any others equivalent, we ſhall perceive the force of his reaſoning, which is this: If there have been among you any one, whoſe preaching hath revealed a redeemer, better adapted to your wants ver. 4.

* This reading of the French bible differs a little from our tranſlation: but a compariſon of the two tranſlations with the original, and with the ſcope of the place, will give the preference to the French reading. *Nonne diſpoſuit nos in utero unus atque idem?* Vid. Poli Syn. in loc.

SERM. II. than he, whom we have preached to you; or if ye had received more excellent gifts than thoſe, which the holy ſpirit ſo abundantly diffuſed among you by our miniſtry, ye might indeed have preferred him before us: but it is not credible, that ye have had ſuch teachers; ye ought then to reſpect our miniſtry.

We need not make any more remarks of this kind; our text, it is eaſy to ſee, ought to be claſſed with them, that are imperfect, and muſt be ſupplied with words to make up the ſenſe. *The rich and the poor meet together* in four articles of equality; becauſe *the Lord hath made them all* EQUAL in *nature*, or in *eſſence*; equal in *privileges*; equal in *appointment*; equal in their *laſt end*. The Lord hath made them equal in *nature*; they have the ſame faculties, and the ſame infirmities: Equal in *privileges*; for both are capable by the excellence of their nature, and more ſtill by that of their religion, to form the nobleſt deſigns: Equal in *deſignation*; for although the rich differ from the poor in their condition, yet both are intended to anſwer the great purpoſes of God with regard to human nature: Finally, they are equal in their *laſt end*; the ſame ſentence of death is paſſed on both, and both alike muſt ſubmit to it. *The rich and the poor meet together*; *the Lord is the maker of them all*. Thus the text affords us four truths worthy of our moſt ſerious attention.

The firſt article of equality, in which men *meet together*, is an equality of *eſſence*, or of *nature*; the Lord hath made them all with the ſame faculties, and with the ſame infirmities.

1. With the ſame *faculties*. What is man? He conſiſts of a body, and of a ſoul united to a body. This definition, or rather, if ye will, this deſcription, agrees to all mankind, to the great as well as to the ſmall, to the rich as well as to the poor. The ſoul of the poor hath the ſame power, as that of the rich, to lay down principles, to infer conſequences, to diſtinguiſh truth from falſhood, to chooſe good or evil, to examine

examine what is moſt advantageous, and moſt glorious to it. The body of the poor, as well as that of the rich, diſplays the wiſdom of him, who formed it; it hath a ſymmetry in its parts, an exactneſs in its motions, and a proportion to its ſecret ſprings. The laws, that unite the body of the poor to his ſoul, are the ſame as thoſe, which unite theſe two beings in the rich; there is the ſame connexion between the two parts, that conſtitute the eſſence of the man; a ſimilar motion of the body produceth a ſimilar thought in the mind, a ſimilar idea of the mind, or a ſimilar emotion of the heart, produceth a ſimilar motion of the body. This is man. Theſe are the faculties of men. Diverſity of condition makes no alteration in theſe faculties.

SERM. II.

2. *The Lord hath made them all* with the ſame *infirmities.* They have the ſame infirmities of body. The body of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is a common receptacle, where a thouſand impurities meet; it is a general rendezvous of pains and ſickneſſes; it is *a houſe of clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt, and is cruſhed before the moth.* Job iv. 19.

They have the ſame mental infirmities. The mind of the rich, like that of the poor, is incapable of ſatisfying itſelf on a thouſand deſirable queſtions. The mind of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is prevented by its natural ignorance, when it would expand itſelf in contemplation, and eclairciſe a number of obvious phœnomena. The ſoul of the rich, like that of the poor, is ſubject to doubt, uncertainty, and ignorance, and, what is more mortifying ſtill, the heart of the rich, like the poor man's heart, is ſubject to the ſame paſſions, to envy, and to anger, and to all the diſorder of ſin.

They have the ſame frailties in the laws, that unite the ſoul to the body. The ſoul of the rich, like the ſoul of the poor, is united to a body, or rather enſlaved by it. The ſoul of the rich, like that of the poor, is interrupted in its moſt profound meditations

SERM. II. by a ſingle ray of light, by the buzzing of a fly, or by the touch of an atom of duſt. The rich man's faculties of reaſoning and of ſelf-determining are ſuſpended, and in ſome ſort vaniſhed and abſorbed, like thoſe of the poor, on the ſlighteſt alteration of the ſenſes, and this alteration of the ſenſes happens to him, as well as to the poor, at the approach of certain objects. David's reaſon is ſuſpended at the ſight of Bathſheba; David no longer diſtinguiſheth good from evil; David forgets the purity of the laws, which he hiſſelf had ſo highly celebrated, and, at the ſight of this object, his whole ſyſtem of piety is refuted, his whole edifice of religion ſinks and diſappears.

The ſecond point of equality, in which *the rich and the poor meet together*, is an equality of *privileges*. To aſpire at certain eminences, when providence hath placed us in inferior ſtations in ſociety, is egregious folly. If a man, who hath only ordinary talents, only a common genius, pretend to acquire an immortal reputation among heroes, and to fill the world with his name and exploits, he acts fancifully and wildly. If he, who was born a ſubject, raſhly and ambitiouſly attempt to aſcend the tribunal of a magiſtrate, or the throne of a king, and to aim at governing, when he is called to obey, he is guilty of rebellion. But this law, which forbids inferiors to arrogate to themſelves ſome privileges, doth not prohibit them from aſpiring at others incomparably more great and glorious.

Let us diſcover, if it be poſſible, the moſt miſerable man in this aſſembly; let us diſſipate the darkneſs, that covers him; let us raiſe him from that kind of grave, in which his indigence and meanneſs conceal him. This man, unknown to the reſt of mankind; this man, who ſeems hardly formed by the creator into an intelligent exiſtence; this man hath, however, the greateſt and moſt glorious privileges. This man, being reconciled to God by religion, hath a right to aſpire to the moſt noble and ſublime objects of it. He

hath

hath a right to elevate his ſoul to God in ardent prayer, and, without the hazard of being taxed with vanity, he may aſſure himſelf, that God, the Great God, encircled in glory, and ſurrounded with the praiſes of the bleſſed, will behold him, hear his prayer, and grant his requeſt. This man hath a right to ſay to himſelf, The attention, that the Lord of nature gives to the government of the univerſe, to the wants of mankind, to the innumerable company of angels, and to his own felicity, doth not prevent this adorable being from attending to me; from occupying himſelf about my perſon, my children, my family, my houſe, my health, my ſubſtance, my ſalvation, my moſt minute concern, even a ſingle *hair of my head.* This man hath a right of addreſſing God by names the moſt tender and mild, yea, if I may venture to ſpeak ſo, by thoſe moſt familiar names, which equals give each other; he may call him his God, his maſter, his father, his friend. Believers have addreſſed God by each of theſe names, and God hath not only permitted them to do ſo, he hath even expreſſed his approbation of their taking theſe names in their mouths. This man hath a right of coming to eat with God at the Lord's table, and to live, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, to live with God, as a man lives with his friend. This man hath a right to apply to himſelf whatever is moſt great, moſt comfortable, moſt extatic in the myſteries of redemption, and to ſay to himſelf; For me the divine intelligence revolved the plan of redemption; for me the ſon of God was appointed before the foundation of the world to be a propitiatory ſacrifice; for me in the fulneſs of time he took mortal fleſh; for me he lived ſeveral years among men in this world; for me he pledged himſelf to the juſtice of his father, and ſuffered ſuch unparalleled puniſhment, as confounds reaſon and ſurpaſſes imagination; for me the holy ſpirit *ſhook the heavens and the earth, and the ſea and the dry land,* and eſtabliſhed a miniſtry, which he confirmed by healing

SERM. II.

Luke xxi. 18.

Hag. ii. 6.

SERM. II. ing the ſick, by raiſing the dead, by caſting out devils, and by ſubverting the whole order of nature. This man hath a right to aſpire to the felicity of the immortal God, to the glory of the immortal God, to the throne of the immortal God. Arrived at the fatal hour, lying on his dying bed, reduced to the ſight of uſeleſs friends, ineffectual remedies, unavailing tears, he hath a right to triumph over death, and to defy his diſturbing in the ſmalleſt degree the tranquil calm, that his ſoul enjoys; he hath a right to ſummon the gates of heaven to admit his ſoul, and to ſay to them, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates! even lift them up, ye everlaſting doors!*

Theſe are the inconteſtible privileges of the man, who appears to us ſo contemptible. I aſk, my brethren, have the nobles of the earth any privileges more glorious than theſe? Do the train of attendants, which follows them, the horſes, that draw them, the grandees, who ſurround them, the ſuperb titles, which command exterior homage, give them any real ſuperiority over the man, who enjoys thoſe privileges, which we have briefly enumerated? Ah! my brethren, nothing proves the littleneſs of great men more than the impreſſion, which the exterior advantages, that diſtinguiſh them from the reſt of mankind, make on their minds. Are ye aware of what ye are doing, when ye deſpiſe them, whom providence placeth for a few years in a ſtation inferior to your own? Ye are deſpiſing and degrading yourſelves, ye are renouncing your real greatneſs, and, by valuing yourſelves for a kind of foreign glory, ye diſcover a contempt for that, which conſtitutes the real dignity of your nature. The glory of man does not conſiſt in his being a maſter, or a rich man, a nobleman, or a king; it conſiſts in his being a man, in his being formed in the image of his creator, and capable of all the elevation, that we have been deſcribing. If ye contemn your inferiors in ſociety, ye plainly declare, that ye are inſenſible to

your

your real dignity; for, had ye derived your ideas of real greatneſs from their true ſource, ye would have reſpected it in perſons, who appear the moſt mean and deſpicable. *The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord hath* endowed *them all* with the ſame privileges. They all *meet together* on the ſame line of equality in regard to their claims of privileges. This was the point to be proved. SERM. II.

We add, in the third place, *The rich and the poor meet together* in an equality of *deſtination*. Rich and poor are placed by providence in different ranks, I grant: but their different ſtations are fixed with the ſame deſign, I mean, to accompliſh the purpoſes of God in regard to men.

What are the deſigns of God in regard to men? What end doth he propoſe to effect by placing us on this planet thirty, forty, or ſixty years, before he declares our eternal ſtate? We have frequently anſwered this important queſtion. God hath placed us here in a ſtate of probation; he hath ſet before our eyes ſupreme felicity and intolerable miſery; he hath pointed out the vices, that conduct to the laſt, and the virtues neceſſary to arrive at the firſt, and he hath declared, that our conduct ſhall determine our future ſtate. This, I think, is the deſign of God in regard to men. This is the notion, that we ought to form, of the end which God propoſes in fixing us a few years upon earth, and in placing us among our fellow-creatures in ſociety.

On this principle, which is the moſt glorious condition? It is neither that, which elevates us higheſt in ſociety, nor that, which procureth us the greateſt conveniences of life. If it be not abſolutely indifferent to men, to whom it is uncertain whether they ſhall quit the preſent world the next moment, or continue almoſt a century in it; I ſay, if it be not abſolutely indifferent to them, whether they be high or low, rich

or

SERM. II. or poor, it would be contrary to all the laws of prudence, were they to determine their choice of a condition by conſiderations of this kind alone. A creature capable of eternal felicity ought to conſider that the moſt glorious condition, which is the moſt likely to procure him the eternal felicity, of which he is capable. Were a wiſe man to chooſe a condition, he would certainly prefer that, in which he could do moſt good; he would always conſider that as the moſt glorious ſtation for himſelf, in which he could beſt anſwer the great end, for which his creator placed him in this world. It is glorious to be at the head of a nation: but if I could do more good in a mean ſtation, than I could do in an eminent poſt, the meaneſt ſtation would be far more glorious to me than the moſt eminent poſt. Why? Becauſe that is moſt glorious to me, which beſt anſwers the end, that my creator propoſed in placing me in this world. God placed me in this world to enable me to do good, and to prepare myſelf by a holy life for a happy eternity. To do good at the head of a nation, certain talents are neceſſary. If I have not theſe talents, not only I ſhould not do good in this poſt: but I ſhould certainly do evil. I ſhould expoſe my country to danger, I ſhould ſink its credit, obſcure its glory, and debaſe its dignity. It is, therefore, incomparably leſs glorious for me to be at the head of a ſtate than to occupy a poſt leſs eminent. It is glorious to fill the higheſt office in the church, to announce the oracles of God, to develop the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, and to direct wandering ſouls to the road, that leads to the ſovereign good: but if I be deſtitute of gifts eſſential to the filling of this office, it is incomparably more glorious to me to remain a pupil than to commence a tutor. Why? Becauſe that ſtation is the moſt eligible to me, which beſt empowers me to anſwer the end, for which my creator placed me in this world. My creator placed me in this world, that I might do good,

and

and that by a holy life I might prepare for a happy eternity. In order to do good in the higheſt offices in the church great talents are neceſſary; if God hath not beſtowed great talents on me, I ſhould not only not do good: but I ſhould do harm. Inſtead of announcing the oracles of God I ſhould preach the traditions of men; I ſhould involve the myſteries of religion in darkneſs inſtead of developing them; I ſhould plunge poor mortals into an abyſs of miſery, inſtead of pointing out the road, which would conduct them to a bleſſed immortality. But by remaining in the ſtate of a diſciple I may obtain attention, docility, and love to truth, which are the virtues of my condition. It is more glorious to be a good ſubject than a bad king; it is more glorious to be a good diſciple than a bad teacher. SERM. II.

But moſt men have falſe ideas of glory, and we form our notions of it from the opinions of theſe unjuſt appraiſers of men and things. That, which elevates us in their eyes, ſeems glorious to us; and we eſteem that contemptible, which abaſeth us before them. We diſcover, I know not what, meanneſs in mechanical employments, and the contempt, that we have for the employ, extends itſelf to him, who follows it, and thus we habituate ourſelves to deſpiſe them, whom God honours. Let us undeceive ourſelves, my brethren; there is no condition ſhameful, except it neceſſarily lead us to ſome infraction of the laws of our ſupreme *lawgiver, who is able to ſave and to deſtroy.* James iv. 12. Strictly ſpeaking, one condition of life is no more honourable than another. There are, I grant, ſome ſtations, in which the objects, that employ thoſe, who fill them, are naturally more noble than thoſe of other ſtations. The condition of a magiſtrate, whoſe employment is to improve and to enforce maxims of government, hath a nobler object than that of a mechanic, whoſe buſineſs it is to improve the leaſt neceſſary art. There is a nobler object in the ſtation of a paſtor

SERM. II. called to publiſh the laws of religion, than in that of a ſchoolmaſter confined to teach the letters of the alphabet. But God will regulate our eternal ſtate not according to the object of our purſuit: but according to the manner, in which we ſhall have purſued it. In this point of light, all ranks are equal, every condition is the ſame. Mankind have, then, an equality of *deſtination.* The rich and the poor are placed in different ranks with the ſame view, both are to anſwer the great end, that God hath propoſed to anſwer by creating and arranging mankind.

Hitherto we have had occaſion for ſome little labour to prove our theſis, that all men are equal, notwithſtanding the various conditions, in which God hath placed them. And ye, my brethren, have had occaſion for ſome docility to feel the force of our arguments. But in our fourth article the truth will eſtabliſh itſelf, and its force will be felt by a recital, yea by a hint of our arguments.

We ſaid, fourthly, that men are equal in their *laſt end*, that the ſame ſentence of death is denounced on all, and that they muſt all alike ſubmit to their fate. On which ſide can we view death, and not receive abundant evidence of this truth? Conſider the certainty of death; the nearneſs of death; the harbingers of death; the ravages of death; ſo many ſides, by which death may be conſidered, ſo many proofs, ſo many demonſtrations, ſo many ſources of demonſtrations of the truth of this ſenſe of my text, *the rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all.*

Gen. iii. 19. Heb. ix. 27. 1. Remark the *certainty* of death; *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return; It is appointed unto men once to die.* The ſentence is univerſal, its univerſality involves all the poſterity of Adam; it includes all conditions, all profeſſions, all ſtations, and every ſtep of life enſures the execution of it.

Whither art thou going, Rich man! thou, who congratulateſt thyſelf becauſe thy *fields bring forth plentifully,*

tifully, and who ſayeſt to thy ſoul, *Soul! thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry?* To death. Whither art thou going, poor man! thou, who art toiling through a languiſhing life, who beggeſt thy bread from door to door, who art continually perplexed in finding out means of procuring bread to eat, and raiment to put on, always an object of the charity of ſome, and of the hard heartedneſs of others? To death. Whither goeſt thou, nobleman! thou, who deckeſt thyſelf with borrowed plumes, who putteſt the renown of thine anceſtors into the liſt of thy virtues, and who thinkeſt thyſelf formed of an earth more refined than that of the reſt of mankind? To death. Whither goeſt thou, peaſant! thou, who derideſt the folly of a peer, and at the ſame time valueſt thyſelf on ſomething equally abſurd? To death. Whither, ſoldier! art thou marching, thou, who talkeſt of nothing but glory and heroiſm, and who, amid many voices ſounding in thine ears, and inceſſantly crying, *Remember, thou art mortal*, art dreaming of, I know not what, immortality? To death. Whither art thou going, merchant! thou, who breatheſt nothing but the increaſe of thy fortune, and who judgeſt of the happineſs or miſery of thy days, not by thine acquiſition of knowledge, and thy practice of virtue: but by the gain or the loſs of thy wealth? To death. Whither are we all going, my dear hearers? To death. Do I exceed the truth, my brethren? Does death regard titles, dignities, and riches? Where is Alexander? Where is Cæſar? Where are all they, whoſe names ſtruck terror through the whole world? They were: but they are no more. They fell before the voice, that cried, *Return, ye children of men. I ſaid, Ye are gods: but ye ſhall die like men. I ſaid, Ye are gods*; this, ye great men of the earth! this is your title; this is the patent, that creates your dignity, that ſubjects us to your commands, and teacheth us to revere your characters: *but ye ſhall die like men*; this is the decree,

SERM. II.

Pſal. xc. 3. lxxxii. 6.

SERM. II. that degrades you, and puts you on a level with us. *Ye are gods*; I will, then, reſpect your authority, and conſider you as images of him, *by whom kings reign: but ye ſhall die*; I will not, then, ſuffer myſelf to be impoſed on by your grandeur, and whatever homage I may yield to my king, I will always remember, that he is a man. The certainty of death is the firſt ſide, on which we may conſider this murderer of mankind, and it is the firſt proof of our fourth propoſition: Mankind are equal in their *laſt end.*

2. The *proximity* of death is a ſecond demonſtration, a ſecond ſource of demonſtrations. The limits of our lives are equal. The life of the rich as well as that of the poor, is *reduced to an hand-breadth.* Sixty, eighty, or a hundred years, is uſually the date of a long life. The ſcepter hath no more privilege in this reſpect than the crook; nor is the palace at any greater diſtance from the tomb, than the cottage from the grave. Heaps of ſilver and gold may intercept the rich man's ſight of death: but they can neither intercept death's ſight of the rich man, nor prevent his forcing the feeble intrenchments, in which he may attempt to hide himſelf.

Pſal. xxxix. 5.

3. The *harbingers* of death are a third demonſtration, a third ſource of demonſtrations. The rich have the ſame forerunners as the poor; both have ſimilar dying agonies, violent ſickneſſes, diſguſtful medicines, intolerable pains, and cruel miſgivings. Paſs through thoſe ſuperb apartments, in which the rich man ſeems to defy the enemy, who lurks and threatens to ſeize him; go through the croud of domeſtics, who ſurround him; caſt your eyes on the bed, where nature and art have contributed to his eaſe. In this grand edifice, amidſt this aſſembly of courtiers, or, ſhall I rather ſay? amidſt this troop of vile ſlaves, ye will find a moſt mortifying and miſerable object. Ye will ſee a viſage all pale, livid, diſtorted; ye will hear the ſhrieks of a wretch tormented with the gravel, or the gout;

gout; ye will ſee a ſoul terrified with the fear of thoſe eternal books, which are about to be opened, of that formidable tribunal, which is already erected, of the awful ſentence, that is about to be denounced. SERM. II.

4. The *ravages* of death make a fourth demonſtration; they are the ſame with the rich as with the poor. Death alike condemns their eyes to impenetrable night, their tongue to eternal ſilence, their whole ſyſtem to total deſtruction. I ſee a ſuperb monument. I approach this ſtriking object. I ſee magnificent inſcriptions. I read the pompous titles of the *moſt noble*, the *moſt puiſſant*, *general*, *prince*, *monarch*, *arbiter of peace*, *arbiter of war*. I long to ſee the inſide of this grand piece of workmanſhip, and I peep under the ſtone, that covers him, to whom all this pomp is conſecrated; there I find, what? . . . . a putrified carcaſe devouring by worms. O vanity of human grandeur! *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Put not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſon of man, in whom is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts periſh. As for man, his days are as graſs; as a flower of the field ſo he flouriſheth; for the wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof ſhall know it no more.* Eccl. i. 2. Pſal. cxlvi. 3,4. ciii. 15,16.

5. Finally, *the judgment*, that follows death, carries our propoſition to the higheſt degree of evidence. *It is appointed unto men once to die: but after this the judgment.* The rich and the poor muſt alike appear before that throne, which S. John deſcribes in the revelation, and before that venerable perſonage, *from whoſe face the heaven and the earth flee away.* If there be any difference between the rich and the poor, it is all, methinks, in favour of the latter. The ſummons, that muſt be one day addreſſed to each of us, *Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip*, this ſummons is always terrible. Ye indigent people! whom God (to uſe the language of ſcripture.) hath *ſet over a few things*, an account of theſe *few things* will be required of you, and Heb. ix. 27. chap. xx. 11. Luke xvi. 2.

SERM. II. and ye will be as ſurely puniſhed for hiding *one talent*, as if ye had hidden more.

Mat. xxv. 27. But how terrible to me ſeems the account, that muſt be given of a great number of talents! If the rich man have ſome advantages over the poor, (and who can doubt that he hath many?) how are his advantages counterpoiſed by the thought of the conſequences of death! What a ſummons, my brethren! is this for a great man, *Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip!* give an account of thy *riches*. Didſt thou acquire them lawfully? or were they the produce of unjuſt dealings, of cruel extortions, of repeated frauds, of violated promiſes, of perjuries and oaths? Didſt thou diſtribute them charitably, compaſſionately, liberally? or didſt thou reſerve them avariciouſly, meanly, barbarouſly? Didſt thou employ them to found hoſpitals, to procure inſtruction for the ignorant, relief for the ſick, conſolations for the afflicted? or didſt thou employ them to cheriſh thy pride, to diſplay thy vanity, to immortalize thine ambition and arrogance? Give an account of thy *reputation*. Didſt thou employ it to relieve the oppreſſed, to protect the widow, and orphan, to maintain juſtice, to diffuſe truth, to propagate religion? or, on the contrary, didſt thou uſe it to degrade others, to deify thy paſſions, to render thyſelf a ſcourge to ſociety, a plague to mankind? Give an account of thine *honours*. Didſt thou direct them to their true end, by contributing all in thy power to the good of ſociety, to the defence of thy country, to the proſperity of trade, to the advantage of the public? or, didſt thou direct them only to thine own private intereſt, to the eſtabliſhment of thy fortune, to the elevation of thy family, to that inſatiable avidity of glory, which gnawed and devoured thee? Ah! my brethren! if we enter very ſeriouſly into theſe reflections, we ſhall not be ſo much ſtruck, as we uſually are, with the diverſity of men's conditions in this life; we ſhall not aſpire very eagerly after the higheſt ranks in this world. *The rich and*

poor

poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all; SERM. that is to ſay, he hath made them equal in their nature, II. equal in their privileges, equal in their deſtination, and equal, as we have proved, in their laſt end.

The inferences, that we intend to draw from what we have ſaid, are not inferences of ſedition and anarchy. We do not mean to diſturb the order of ſociety; nor, by affirming that all men have an eſſential equality, to reprobate that ſubordination, without which ſociety would be nothing but confuſion, and the men, who compoſe it, a lawleſs banditti. We affirm, that the ſubject and the prince, the maſter and the ſervant, are truly and properly equal: but far be it from us to infer, that therefore the ſubject ſhould withdraw his ſubmiſſion from his prince, or the ſervant diminiſh his obedience to his maſter. On the contrary, ſubjects and ſervants would renounce all, that is glorious in their conditions, if they entertained ſuch wild ideas in their minds. That, which equals them to the ſuperiors, whom providence hath ſet over them, is the belief of their being capable, as well as their ſuperiors, of anſwering the end, that God propoſeth in creating mankind. They would counteract this end, were they to refuſe to diſcharge thoſe duties of their condition, to which providence calls them.

Nor would we derive from the truths, which we have affirmed, fanatical inferences. We endeavoured before to preclude all occaſion for reproach on this article, yet perhaps we may not eſcape it; for how often does an unfriendly auditor, in order to enjoy the pleaſure of decrying a diſguſtful truth, affect to forget the corrective, with which the preacher ſweetens it? we repeat it, therefore, once more; we do not pretend to affirm, that the conditions of all men are abſolutely equal, by affirming that in ſome ſenſes all mankind are on a level. We do not ſay, that the man, whom ſociety agrees to contemn, is as happy as the man, whom ſociety unites to revere. We do not ſay, that the man, who hath no

where

SERM. II. where to hide his head, is as happy as he, who is commodiouſly accommodated. We do not ſay, that a man, who is deſtitute of all the neceſſaries of life, is as happy as the man, whoſe fortune is ſufficient to procure him all the conveniencies of it. No, my brethren! we have no more deſign to deduce inferences of fanaticiſm from the doctrine of the text, than we have to infer maxims of anarchy and rebellion. But we infer juſt concluſions conformable to the precious gift of reaſon, that the creator hath beſtowed on us, and to the incomparably more precious gift of religion, with which he hath enriched us. Derive then, my brethren, concluſions of theſe kinds, and let them be the application of this diſcourſe.

Derive from our ſubject concluſions of *moderation*. Labour, for it is allowable, and the morality of the goſpel doth not condemn it, labour to render your name illuſtrious, to augment your fortune, to eſtabliſh your reputation, to contribute to the pleaſure of your life; but labour no more than becomes you. Let efforts of this kind never make you loſe ſight of the great end of life. Remember, as riches, grandeur, and reputation, are not the ſupreme good, ſo obſcurity, meanneſs, and indigence, are not the ſupreme evil. Let the care of avoiding the ſupreme evil, and the deſire of obtaining the ſupreme good, be always the moſt ardent of our wiſhes, and let others yield to that of arriving at the chief good.

Derive from our doctrine concluſions of *acquieſcence* in the laws of providence. If it pleaſe providence to put an eſſential difference between you and the great men of the earth, let it be your holy ambition to excel in it. Ye cannot murmur without being guilty of reproaching God, becauſe he hath made you what ye are; becauſe he formed you men, and not angels, archangels, or ſeraphims. Had he annexed eſſential privileges to the higheſt ranks, ſubmiſſion would always be your lot, and ye ought always to adore, and to ſubmit

mit to that intelligence, which governs the world: but this is not your caſe. God gives to the great men of the earth an exterior, tranſient, ſuperficial glory: but he hath made you ſhare with them a glory real, ſolid, and permanent. What difficulty can a wiſe man find by acquieſcing in this law of providence? SERM. II.

Derive from the truths, that ye have heard, concluſions of *vigilance*. Inſtead of ingeniouſly flattering yourſelf with the vain glory of being elevated above your neighbour; or of ſuffering your mind to ſink under the puerile mortification of being inferior to him; inceſſantly enquire what is the virtue of your ſtation, the duty of your rank, and uſe your utmoſt induſtry to fill it worthily. You are a magiſtrate, the virtue of your ſtation, the duty of your rank, is to employ yourſelf wholly to ſerve your fellow ſubjects in inferior ſtations, to prefer the public good before your own private intereſt, to ſacrifice yourſelf for the advantage of that ſtate, the reins of which you hold. Practiſe this virtue, fulfil theſe engagements, put off ſelf-intereſt, and devote yourſelf wholly to a people, who entruſt you with their properties, their liberties, and their lives. You are a ſubject, the duty of your rank, the virtue of your ſtation, is ſubmiſſion, and you ſhould obey not only through fear of puniſhment: but thro' a wiſe regard for order. Practiſe this virtue, fulfil this engagement, make it your glory to ſubmit, and in the authority of princes reſpect the power of God, whoſe miniſters and repreſentatives they are. You are a rich man, the virtue of your ſtation, the duty of your condition, is beneficence, generoſity, magnanimity. Practiſe theſe virtues, diſcharge theſe duties. Let your bowels be always moved with the neceſſities of the wretched, and your ears open to their complaints. Never omit an opportunity of doing good, and be in ſociety a general reſource, an univerſal refuge.

From the truths, that ye have heard, derive motives of *zeal and fervour*. It is mortifying, I own, in

SERM II. ſome reſpects, when one feels certain emotions of dignity and elevation, to ſink in ſociety. It is mortifying to receive bread from one, who is a man like ourſelves. It is mortifying to be trodden underfoot by our equals, and, to ſay all in a word, to be in ſtations very unequal among our equals. But this œconomy will quickly vaniſh. *The faſhion of this world* will preſently *paſs away*, and we ſhall ſoon enter that bleſſed ſtate, in which all diſtinctions will be aboliſhed, and in which all, that is noble in immortal ſouls, will ſhine in all its ſplendor. Let us, my brethren, ſigh after this period, let us make it the object of our moſt conſtant and ardent prayers. God grant, we may all have a right to pray for it! God grant, our text may be one day verified in a new ſenſe. May all, who compoſe this aſſembly, maſters and ſervants, rich and poor, may we all, my dear hearers, having acknowledged ourſelves equal in eſſence, in privileges, in deſtination, in laſt end, may we all alike participate the ſame glory. God grant it for his mercy-ſake. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON III.

The WORTH of the SOUL.

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The Worth of the Soul.

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The WORTH of the SOUL.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

MY brethren, before we enforce the truths, which Jeſus Chriſt included in the words of the text, we will endeavour to fix the meaning of it. This depends on the term *ſoul*, which is uſed in this paſſage, and which is one of the moſt equivocal words in ſcripture; for it is taken in different, and even in contrary ſenſes, ſo that ſometimes it ſignifies a *dead body*. We will not divert your attention now by reciting the long liſt of explications, that may be given to the term: but we will content ourſelves with remarking, that it can be taken only in two ſenſes in the text. Lev. xxi. 1.

Soul may be taken for *life*; and in this ſenſe the term is uſed by S. Matthew, who ſays, *They are dead, who ſought the young child's ſoul.* ii. 20. *Soul* may be taken for that ſpiritual part of us, which we call *the ſoul* by excellence; and in this ſenſe it is uſed by our Lord, who ſays, *fear not them, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him, which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell.* x. 28.

If we take the word in the firſt ſenſe, for *life*, we put into the mouth of Jeſus Chriſt a propoſition verified by experience; that is, that men conſider life as the greateſt of all temporal bleſſings, and that they part with every

SERM. III. every thing to preſerve it. This rule hath its exceptions: but the exceptions confirm the rule. Sometimes, indeed, a diſguſt with the world, a principle of religion, a point of honour, will incline men to ſacrifice their lives: but theſe particular caſes cannot prevent our ſaying in the general, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his life?*

If we take the word for that part of man, which we call the *ſoul* by excellence, Jeſus Chriſt intended to point out to us, not what men uſually do; (for alas! it happens too often, that men ſacrifice their ſouls to the meaneſt and moſt ſordid intereſt.) but what they always ought to do. He meant to teach us, that the ſoul is the nobleſt part of us, and that nothing is too great to be given for its ranſom.

Both theſe interpretations are probable, and each hath its partizans, and its proofs. But, although we would not condemn the firſt, we prefer the laſt, not only becauſe it is the moſt noble meaning, and opens the moſt extenſive field of meditation: but becauſe it ſeems to us the moſt conformable to our Saviour's deſign in ſpeaking the words.

Judge by what precedes our text. *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* Jeſus Chriſt ſpoke thus to fortify his diſciples againſt the temptations, to which their profeſſion of the goſpel was about to expoſe them. If by the word ſoul we underſtand the *life*, we ſhall be obliged to go a great way about to give any reaſonable ſenſe to the words. On the contrary, if we take the word for the *ſpirit*, the meaning of the whole is clear and eaſy. Now it ſeems to me beyond a doubt, that Jeſus Chriſt, by the manner in which he hath connected the text with the preceding verſe, uſed the term *ſoul* in the latter ſenſe.

Judge of our comment alſo by what follows. *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul? For*, adds our Lord immediately after, *the Son of man ſhall come in the*

the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works. What connection have theſe words with our text, if we take the word *ſoul* for *life?* What connection is there between this propoſition, *Man hath nothing more valuable than life*, and this, *For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels?* Whereas if we adopt our ſenſe of the term, the connection inſtantly appears. SERM. III.

We will, then, retain this explication. By the *ſoul* we underſtand here the *ſpirit* of man; and, this word being thus explained, the meaning of Jeſus Chriſt in the whole paſſage is underſtood in part, and one remark will be ſufficient to explain it wholly. We muſt attend to the true meaning of the phraſe, *loſe his ſoul*, which immediately precedes the text, and which we ſhall often uſe to explain the text itſelf. To *loſe the ſoul* does not ſignify to be deprived of this part of one's ſelf; for, however great this puniſhment might be, it is the chief object of a wicked man's wiſhes: but to *loſe the ſoul* is to loſe thoſe real bleſſings, and to ſuſtain thoſe real evils, which a ſoul is capable of enjoying and of ſuffering. When, therefore, Jeſus Chriſt ſays in the words, that precede the text, *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* and in the text, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* he exhibits one truth under different faces, ſo that our reflections will naturally be turned ſometimes to the one, and ſometimes to the other of theſe propoſitions. He points out, I ſay, two truths, which being united ſignify, that as the conqueſt of the univerſe would not be an object of value ſufficient to engage us to ſacrifice our ſouls, ſo if we had loſt them, no price could be too great to be paid for the recovery of them. Let us here fix our attention; and let us examine what conſtitutes the dignity of the ſoul. Let us enquire

I. The excellence of its nature;

II. The infinity of its duration;

III. The

SERM. III. The price of its redemption; Three articles
III. which will divide this diſcourſe.

I. Nothing can be given in exchange for our ſouls. We prove this propoſition by the excellence of its *nature*. What is the ſoul? There have been great abſurdities, in the anſwers given to this queſtion. In former ages of darkneſs, when moſt of the ſtudies, that were purſued for the cultivation of the mind, ſerved to render it unfruitful; when, people thought, they had arrived at the higheſt degree of knowledge, if they had filled their memories with pompous terms and ſuperb nonſenſe; in thoſe times, I ſay, it was thought, the queſtion might be fully and ſatisfactorily anſwered, and clear and complete ideas given of the nature of the ſoul. But in later times, when, philoſophy being cleanſed from the impurities that infected the ſchools, equivocal terms were rejected, and only clear and diſtinct ideas admitted, and thus literary inveſtigations reduced to real and ſolid uſe; in theſe days, I ſay, philoſophers, and philoſophers of great name, have been afraid to anſwer this queſtion, and have affirmed that the narrow limits, that confine our reſearches, diſable us from acquiring any other than obſcure notions of the human ſoul, and that all, which we can propoſe to elucidate the nature of it, ſerve rather to diſcover what it is not, than what it is. But if the deciſions of the former ſavour of preſumption, does not the timid reſervedneſs of the latter ſeem a blameable modeſty? If we be incapable of giving ſuch ſufficient anſwers to the queſtion, as would fully ſatisfy a genius earneſt in enquiring, and eager for demonſtration, may we not be able to give clear and high ideas of our ſouls, and ſo to verify theſe ſententious words of the Saviour of the world, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

Indeed, we do clearly and diſtinctly know three properties of the ſoul; and every one of us knows by his own experience, that it is capable of knowing, willing, and feeling. The firſt of theſe properties is intelligence,

telligence, the ſecond volition, the third ſenſation, or, more properly, the acuteſt ſenſibility. I am coming now to the deſign of my text, and here I hope to prove, at leaſt to the intelligent part of my hearers, by the nature of the ſoul, that the loſs of it is the greateſt of all loſſes, and that nothing is too valuable to be given for its recovery. SERM. III.

Intelligence is the firſt property of the ſoul, and the firſt idea, that we ought to form of it, to know its nature. The perfection of this property conſiſts in having clear and diſtinct ideas, extenſive and certain knowledge. *To loſe the ſoul*, in this reſpect, is to ſink into total ignorance. This loſs is irreparable, and he, who ſhould have loſt his ſoul in this ſenſe, could give nothing too great for its recovery. Knowledge and happineſs are inſeparable in intelligent beings, and, it is clear, a ſoul deprived of intelligence cannot enjoy perfect felicity. Few men, I know, can be perſuaded to admit this truth, and there are, I muſt allow, great reſtrictions to be made on this article, while we are in the preſent ſtate.

1. In our preſent ſtate, *every degree of knowledge, that the mind acquires, coſts the body much.* A man, who would make a progreſs in ſcience, muſt retire, meditate, and, in ſome ſenſe, involve himſelf in himſelf. Now, meditation exhauſts the animal ſpirits; cloſe attention tires the brain; the collecting of the ſoul into itſelf often injures the health, and ſometimes puts a period to life.

2. In our preſent ſtate, *our knowledge is confined within narrow bounds.* Queſtions the moſt worthy of our curioſity, and the moſt proper to animate and inflame us, are unanſwerable; for the objects lie beyond our reach. From all our efforts to eclairciſe ſuch queſtions, we ſometimes derive only mortifying reflections on the weakneſs of our capacities, and the narrow limits of our knowledge.

SERM. III.

3. In this preſent ſtate, *ſciences are incapable of demonſtration*, and conſiſt, in regard to us, of little more than probabilities and appearances. A man, whoſe genius is a little exact, is obliged in multitudes of caſes to doubt, and to ſuſpend his judgment; and his pleaſure of inveſtigating a point is almoſt always interrupted by the too well-grounded fear of taking a ſhadow for a ſubſtance, a phantom for a reality.

4. In this world, *moſt* of thoſe *ſciences*, in the ſtudy of which we ſpend the beſt part of life, *are improperly called ſciences*; they have indeed ſome diſtant relation to our wants in this preſent ſtate: but they have no reference at all to our real dignity. What relation to the real dignity of man hath the knowledge of languages, the arranging of various arbitrary and barbarous terms in the mind to enable one to expreſs one thing in a hundred different words? What relation to the real dignity of man hath the ſtudy of antiquity? Is it worth while to hold a thouſand conferences, and to toil thro' a thouſand volumes, for the ſake of diſcovering the reveries of our anceſtors?

5. In this world we often ſee *real* and uſeful *knowledge deprived of its luſtre* through the ſupercilious neglect of mankind, and ſcience falſly ſo called crowned with their applauſe. One man, whoſe mind is a kind of ſcientific chaos, full of vain ſpeculations and confuſed ideas, ſhall be preferred before another, whoſe ſpeculations have always been directed to form his judgment, to purify his ideas, and to bow his heart to truth and virtue. This partiality is often ſeen. Now, although it argues a narrowneſs of ſoul to make happineſs depend on the opinions of others, yet it is natural for intelligent beings, placed among other intelligent beings, to wiſh for that approbation, which is due to real merit. Were the preſent life of any long duration, were not the proximity of all-purſuing death a powerful conſolation againſt all our inconve-

conveniences, theſe unjuſt eſtimations would be very mortifying. SERM. III.

Such being the imperfections, the defects, and the obſtacles of our knowledge, we ought not to be ſurpriſed, if in general we do not comprehend the great influence, that the perfection of our faculty of thinking and knowing hath over our happineſs. And yet even in this life, and with all theſe diſadvantages, our knowledge, however difficult to acquire, however confined, uncertain, and partial, how little ſoever it may be applauded, contributes to our felicity. Even in this life there is an extreme difference between a learned and an illiterate man: between him, whoſe knowledge of languages enables him, (ſo to ſpeak.) to converſe with people of all nations, and of all ages; and him, who can only converſe with his own cotemporary countrymen: between him, whoſe knowledge of hiſtory enables him to diſtinguiſh the ſucceſsful from the hazardous, and to profit by the vices and the virtues of his predeceſſors; and him, who falls every day into miſtakes inſeparable from the want of experience: between him whoſe own underſtanding weighs all in the balance of truth; and him, who every moment needs a guide to conduct him. Even in this life, a man collected within himſelf, ſequeſtered from the reſt of mankind, ſeparated from an intercourſe with all the living, deprived of all, that conſtitutes the bliſs of ſociety, entombed, if the expreſſion may be allowed, in a ſolitary cloſet, or in a duſty library, ſuch a man enjoys an innocent pleaſure, more ſatisfactory and refined than that, which places of diverſion the moſt frequented, and ſights the moſt ſuperb, can afford.

But if, even in this life, learning and knowledge have ſo much influence over our happineſs, what ſhall we enjoy, when our ſouls ſhall be freed from their ſlavery to the ſenſes? What, when we are permitted to indulge to the utmoſt the pleaſing deſire of knowing? What felicity, when God ſhall unfold to our contem-

SERM. III. plation that boundleſs extent of truth and knowledge, which his intelligence revolves! What happineſs will accompany our certain knowledge of the nature, the perfections, and the purpoſes of God! What pleaſure will attend our diſcovery of the profound wiſdom, the perfect equity, and the exact fitneſs of thoſe events, which often ſurprized and offended us! Above all, what ſublime delight muſt we enjoy, when we find our own intereſt connected with every truth, and all ſerve to demonſtrate the reality, the duration, the inamiſſibility of our happineſs! How think ye, my brethren, is not ſuch a property beyond all valuation? Can the world indemnify us for the final loſs of it? If we have had the unhappineſs to loſe it, ought any thing to be accounted too great to be given for its recovery? And is not this expreſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, in this view of it, full of meaning and truth, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

What we have affirmed of the firſt property of our ſouls, that it is infinitely capable of contributing to our happineſs, although we can never fully comprehend it on earth, we affirm of the other two properties, volition, and ſenſibility.

The perfection of the will conſiſts in a perfect harmony between the holineſs, and the plenitude, of our deſires. Now, to what degree ſoever we carry our holineſs on earth, it is always mixed with imperfection. And, as our holineſs is imperfect, our enjoyments muſt be ſo too. Moreover, as providence itſelf ſeems often to gratify an irregular will, we cannot well comprehend the miſery of loſing the ſoul in this reſpect. But judge of this loſs, (and let one reflection ſuffice on this article.) judge of this loſs by this conſideration. In that œconomy, into which our ſouls muſt enter, the being, the moſt eſſentially holy, I mean God, is the moſt perfectly happy; and the moſt obſtinately wicked being is the moſt completely miſerable.

In

In like manner, we cannot well comprehend to what degree the property of our ſouls, that renders us ſuſceptible of ſenſations, can be carried. How miſerable ſoever the ſtate of a man expoſed to heavy afflictions on earth may be, a thouſand cauſes leſſen the weight of them. Sometimes reaſon aſſiſts the ſufferer, and ſometimes religion, ſometimes a friend condoles, and ſometimes a remedy relieves; and this thought at all times remains, death will ſhortly terminate all my ills. The ſame reflections may be made on ſenſations of pleaſure, which are always mixed, ſuſpended, and interrupted. SERM. III.

Nevertheleſs, the experience, that we have of our ſenſibility on earth, is ſufficient to give us ſome juſt notions of the greatneſs of that loſs, which a ſoul may ſuſtain in this reſpect; nor is there any need to arouſe our imaginations by images of an œconomy, of which we have no idea.

The moſt depraved of mankind, they, who are ſlaves to their ſenſes, may comprehend the great miſery of a ſtate, in which the ſenſes will be tormented, even better than a believer can, who uſually ſtudies to diminiſh the authority of ſenſe, and to free his ſoul from its lawleſs ſway.

Judge ye, then, of the loſs of the ſoul, ye ſenſual minds, by this ſingle conſideration, if ye have been inſenſible to all the reſt. When we endeavoured to convince you of the greatneſs of this loſs by urging the privation of that knowledge, which the elect enjoy now, and which they hope to enjoy hereafter, ye were not affected with this miſery, becauſe ye conſidered the pleaſure of knowing as a chimera. When we attempted to convince you of the miſery of loſing the ſoul by urging the privation of virtue, and the ſtinging remorſe, that follows ſin, ye were not touched with this miſery, becauſe virtue ye conſider as a reſtraint, and remorſe as a folly. But as ye know no other felicity, nor any other miſery, than what your ſenſes

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SERM. III. tranſmit to your ſouls, judge of the loſs of the ſoul by conceiving a ſtate, in which all the ſenſes ſhall be puniſhed. The loſs of the ſoul is the loſs of thoſe harmonious ſounds, which have ſo often charmed your ears; it is the loſs of thoſe exquiſite flavours, that your palate has ſo often reliſhed; it is the loſs of all thoſe objects of deſire, which have excited your paſſions. The loſs of the ſoul is an ocean of pain, the bare idea of which hath ſo often made you tremble, when religion called you to ſail on it. The loſs of the ſoul will be in regard to you the impriſonment of yon confeſſor, incloſed in a dark and filthy dungeon, a prey to infection and putrefaction, deprived of the air and the light. The loſs of the ſoul will reduce you to the condition of that galley ſlave, who groans under the laſhes of a barbarous officer, who is loaded with a galling chain, who ſinks under the labour of that oar, which he works, or rather, with which he hiſſelf is trailed along. The loſs of the ſoul will place you in the condition of yon martyr on the wheel, whoſe living limbs are disjointed and racked, whoſe lingering life is loth to ceaſe, who lives to glut the rage of his tormentors, and who expires only through an overflowing acceſs of pain, his executioners with a barbarous induſtry being frugal of his blood and his ſtrength, in order to make him ſuffer as much, as he can poſſibly ſuffer, before he dies.

But, as I ſaid before, all theſe images convey but very imperfect ideas of the loſs of our ſouls. Were we to extend our ſpeculations as far as the ſubject would allow, it would be eaſy to prove, that the ſoul is capable of enjoying ſenſible pleaſures infinitely more refined, and of ſuffering pains infinitely more excruciating, than all thoſe, which are felt in this world. In this world, ſenſations of pleaſure and pain are proportioned to the end, that the creator propoſed in rendering us capable of them. This end is almoſt always the preſervation and well-being of the body during the

the ſhort period of mortal life. To anſwer this end, it is not neceſſary, that pleaſure and pain ſhould be ſo exquiſite as our ſenſes may be capable of enduring. If our ſenſes give us notice of the approach of things hurtful and beneficial to us, it is ſufficient. SERM. III.

But in heaven ſenſible pleaſures will be infinitely more exquiſite. There the love of God will have its free courſe. There the promiſes of religion will all be fulfilled. There the labours of the righteous will be rewarded. There we ſhall diſcover how far the power of God will be diſplayed in favour of an elect ſoul. In like manner, the extent of divine power in puniſhing the wicked will appear in their future ſtate of miſery. That juſtice muſt be glorified, which nothing but the blood of Jeſus Chriſt could appeaſe in favour of the elect. There the ſinner muſt fall a victim to the wrath of God. There he muſt experience how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.* Heb. x. 31. Hath a man, who is threatened with theſe miſeries, any thing too valuable to give for his redemption from them? Is not the nature of our ſouls, which is known by theſe three properties, underſtanding, volition, and ſenſibility, expreſſive of its dignity? Does not this demonſtrate this propoſition of our Saviour, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

II. The *Immortality* of a ſoul conſtitutes its dignity, and its endleſs duration is a ſource of demonſtrations in favour of the propoſition in the text. This dignity is inconteſtible. The principle of the immortality of the ſoul, from which we reaſon, is undeniable. Two ſuppoſitions may ſeem, at firſt ſight, to weaken the evidence of the immortality of the ſoul. Firſt, the cloſe union of the ſoul to the body ſeems unfavourable to the doctrine of its immortality, and to predict its diſſolution with the body. But this ſuppoſition, methinks, vaniſheth, when we conſider what a diſproportion there is between the properties of the ſoul, and thoſe of the body. This diſproportion proves, that they

SERM. III. they are two diſtinct ſubſtances. The ſeparation of two diſtinct ſubſtances makes indeed ſome change in the manner of their exiſting: but it can make none really in their exiſtence.

But, whatever advantages we may derive from this reaſoning, I freely acknowledge, that this, of all philoſophical arguments for the immortality of the ſoul, the leaſt of any affects me. The great queſtion, on this article, is not what we think of our ſouls, when we conſider them in themſelves, independently on God, whoſe omnipotence ſurrounds and governs them. Could an infidel demonſtrate, againſt us, that the human ſoul is material, and that therefore it muſt periſh with the body: Could we, on the contrary, demonſtrate, againſt him, that the ſoul is immaterial, and that therefore it is not ſubject to laws of matter, and muſt ſurvive the deſtruction of the body; neither ſide, in my opinion, would gain any thing conſiderable. The principal queſtion, that, which alone ought to determine our notions on this article, would remain unexamined; that is, whether God will employ his power over our ſouls to perpetuate, or to deſtroy them. For could an infidel prove, that God would employ his power to annihilate our ſouls, in vain ſhould we have demonſtrated, that they were naturally immortal; for we ſhould be obliged to own, that they are mortal in reſpect of the will of that God, whoſe omnipotence rules them. In like manner, if we could prove to an unbeliever, that God would employ his power to preſerve them in eternal exiſtence, in vain would he have demonſtrated, that conſidered in themſelves they are mortal; and he would be obliged in his turn to allow, that human ſouls are immortal in virtue of the ſupreme power of God. Now, my brethren, the ſuppoſition, that God will employ his power to annihilate our ſouls, will entirely diſappear, if ye attend to the well-known and familiar argument of the connection between the immortality of the ſoul, and that deſire of immortality, which

which the creator hath imparted to it. What can we reply to a man who reaſons in this manner? SERM. III.

I find myſelf in a world, where all things declare the perfections of the creator. The more I conſider all the parts, the more I admire the fitneſs of each to anſwer the end of him, who created them all. Among numberleſs productions perfectly correſpondent to their deſtination I find only one being, whoſe condition doth not ſeem to agree with that marvellous order, which I have obſerved in all the reſt. This being is my own ſoul. And what is this ſoul of mine? Is it fire? Is it air? Is it ethereal matter? Under whatever notions I conſider it, I am at a loſs to define it. However, notwithſtanding this obſcurity, I do perceive enough of its nature to convince me of a great diſproportion between the preſent ſtate of my ſoul, and that end, for which its creator ſeems to have formed it. This ſoul, I know, I feel, (and, of all arguments, there are none more convincing than thoſe, that are taken from ſentiment.) this ſoul is a being eagerly bent on the enjoyment of a happineſs infinite in its duration. Should any one offer me a ſtate of perfect happineſs, that would continue ten thouſand years, an aſſemblage of reputation and riches, grandeur and magnificence, perhaps, dazled with its glare, I might cede my pretenſions in conſideration of this enjoyment. But, after all, I fully perceive, that this felicity, how long, and how perfect ſoever it might be, would be inadequate to my wiſhes. Ten thouſand years are too few to gratify my deſires; my deſires leap the bounds of all fixed periods of duration, and roll along a boundleſs eternity. What is not eternal is unequal to my wiſhes, eternity only can ſatisfy them.

Such is my ſoul. But where is it lodged? Its place is the ground of my aſtoniſhment. This ſoul, this ſubject of ſo many deſires, inhabits a world of vanity and nothingneſs. Whether I climb the higheſt eminences, or pry into the deepeſt indigence, I can diſ-

SERM. III. cover no object capable of filling my capacious desires. I ascend the thrones of sovereigns, I descend into the beggar's dust; I walk the palaces of princes, I lodge in the peasant's cabbin; I retire into the closet to be wise, I avoid recollection, choose ignorance, and increase the crowd of idiots; I live in solitude, I rush into the social multitude: but every where I find a mortifying void. In all these places there is nothing satisfactory. In each I am more unhappy, through the desire of seeing new objects, than satisfied with the enjoyment of what I possess. At most, I experience nothing in all these pleasures, which my concupiscence multiplies, but a mean of rendering my condition tolerable, not a mean of making it perfectly happy.

How can I reconcile these things? How can I make the creator agree with himself? There is one way of doing this, a singular, but a certain way; a way, that solves all difficulties, and covers infidelity with confusion; a way, that teacheth me what I am, whence I came, and for what my creator hath designed me. Although God hath placed me in this world, yet he doth not design to limit my prospects to it; though he hath mixed me with mere animals, yet he doth not intend to confound me with them; though he hath lodged my soul in a frail perishable body, yet he doth not mean to involve it in the dissolution of this frame. Without supposing immortality, that, which constitutes the dignity of man, makes his misery. These desires of immortal duration, this faculty of thinking and reflecting, of expanding and perpetuating the mind; this superiority of soul, that seems to elevate mankind above beasts, actually place the beast above the man, and fill him with these bitter reflections full of mortification and pain. Ye crawling reptiles! ye beasts of the field! destitute of intelligence and reason! if my soul be not immortal, I envy your condition. Content with your own organs, pleased with ranging the fields, and browsing the herbage, your desires need

no

no reſtraint; for all your wiſhes are fully ſatisfied. SERM. While I, abounding on the one hand with inſatiable III. deſires, and on the other confined amidſt vain and unſatisfactory objects, I am on this account unhappy!

We repeat theſe philoſophical reaſonings, my brethren, only for the ſake of convincing you, that we are in poſſeſſion of immenſe advantages over ſceptics in this diſpute. On the principles of an unbeliever, ye ſee, were his notion of revelation well-grounded; were the ſacred book, in which ſo many characters of truth ſhine, an human production; were a reaſonable man obliged to admit no other propoſitions than thoſe, which have been allowed at the tribunal of right reaſon; yea, we ſay more, were our ſouls material, we ought, on the ſuppoſitions before mentioned, to admit the immortality of the ſoul as moſt conformable to our beſt notions of the will of our creator.

But, when we are thus convinced of our immortality, need we any new arguments to demonſtrate the propoſition included in the text, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* Moſt ſubjects may be made to appear with greater or leſs dignity, according to the greater or ſmaller degree of importance, in which the preacher places it. Pompous expreſſions, bold figures, lively images, ornaments of eloquence, may often ſupply either a want of dignity in the ſubject diſcuſſed, or a want of proper diſpoſitions in auditors, who attend the diſcuſſion of it. But, in my opinion, every attempt to give importance to a motive taken from eternity, is more likely to enfeeble the doctrine than to invigorate it. Motives of this kind are ſelf-ſufficient. Deſcriptions the moſt ſimple, and the moſt natural, that can be made, are always, I think, the moſt pathetic, and the moſt terrifying; nor can I find an expreſſion, on this article, more eloquent and more emphatical than this of S. Paul, *The things which are ſeen, are temporal: but the things, which are not ſeen, are eternal.* Were the poſſeſſion of the whole world the price, that ye aſk, in 2 Cor. iii. 18.

SERM. III. *exchange for your ſouls*; were the whole world free from thoſe characters of vanity, which open ſuch a boundleſs field to our reflections; would there not always be this diſproportion between a periſhing world, and a ſoul aſpiring at felicity, that the world would end, and the ſoul would never die?

Death puts an end to the moſt ſpecious titles, to the moſt dazling grandeur, and to the moſt delicious life; and the thought of this period of human glory reminds me of the memorable action of a prince, who, although he was a heathen, was wiſer than many chriſtians; I mean the great Saladin. After he had ſubdued Egypt, paſſed the Euphrates, and conquered cities without number; after he had retaken Jerûſalem, and performed exploits more than human, in thoſe wars, which ſuperſtition had ſtirred up for the recovery of the holy land; he finiſhed his life in the performance of an action, that ought to be tranſmitted to the moſt diſtant poſterity. A moment before he uttered his laſt ſigh, he called the herald, who had carried his banner before him in all his battles, he commanded him to faſten to the top of a lance the ſhroud, in which the dying prince was ſoon to be buried. Go, ſaid he, carry this lance, unfurl this banner, and, while you lift up this ſtandard, proclaim; *This, This is all, that remains to Saladin the great, the conqueror and the King of the empire, of all his glory.** Chriſtians! I perform to day the office of this herald. I faſten to the top of a ſpear ſenſual and intellectual pleaſures, worldly riches, and human honours. All theſe I reduce to the piece of drape, in which ye will ſhortly be buried. This ſtandard of death I lift up in your ſight, and I cry; This, This is the only advantage, that will remain to you, of the poſſeſſions, for which ye exchanged your ſouls. Are ſuch poſſeſſions too great to be given in exchange for ſuch a ſoul? Can the idea of their periſhing nature prevail over the idea of the immortality of the ſoul? And do

* Maimb. Hiſt. des Croiſades, lib. vi. p. 572. de l'Edit. in 4.

do ye not feel the truth of the text, *What ſhall a man,* SERM.
a rational man, a man, who is capable of comparing III.
eternity with time, What ſhall ſuch a man *give in exchange for his ſoul?*

Finally, we make a reflection of another kind to convince you of the dignity of your ſouls, and to perſuade you, that nothing can be too valuable to be given in exchange for them. This is taken from the aſtoniſhing works, that God hath performed in their favour. We will confine ourſelves to one article, to the ineſtimable price, that God hath given for the redemption of them. Hear theſe words of the holy ſcriptures, *Ye are bought with a price. Ye were redeemed* 1 Cor. vi. 20. *from your vain converſation, not with corruptible things, as* 1 Pet. i. 18. *ſilver and gold: but with the precious blood of Chriſt.*

Some of you, perhaps, may ſay, as the limits of a ſermon will not allow us to ſpeak of more than one of the wondrous works of God in favour of immortal ſouls, we ought, at leaſt, to chooſe that, which is moſt likely to affect an audience, and not to dwell on a ſubject, which, having been ſo often repeated, will make only ſlight impreſſions on their minds. Perhaps, were we to inform you, that, in order to ſave your ſouls, God had ſubverted formerly all the laws of nature, or, to uſe the language of a prophet, that he had *ſhaken the* Hag. ii. 6. *heavens and the earth, the ſea and the dry land*: Perhaps, were we to tell you, that, in order to ſave your ſouls, God deferred the end of the world, and put off the laſt viciſſitudes, that are to put a period to the duration of this univerſe, that, according to St. Peter, *the Lord* 2 Pet. iii. 9. *is long-ſuffering to us-ward*: Perhaps, were we to affirm, that, in order to ſave our ſouls, he will come one day on the clouds of heaven, ſitting on a throne, ſurrounded with glorious angels, accompanied with myriads of ſhouting voices, to deliver them with the greater pomp, and to ſave them with more ſplendour: Perhaps, by relating all theſe mighty works done for our ſouls, we might excite in you ideas of their dignity more lively

SERM. III. lively than that, which we have choſen, and to which we intend to confine our attention. But, ſurmount, if ye can, your cuſtomary indolence, and form an adequate idea of the dignity of the ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, in order the better to judge of the dignity of thoſe ſouls, of which his blood was the price.

Go, learn it in heaven. Behold the deity. Approach his throne. Obſerve the *thouſand thouſands miniſtering unto him, ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtanding before him.* See his eyes ſparkling with fire, and his majeſty and glory filling his ſanctuary, and, by the dignity of the victim ſacrificed, judge of the value of the ſacrifice.

Dan. vii. 10.

Go, ſtudy it in all the œconomies, that preceded this ſacrifice. Obſerve the types, which prefigured it; the ſhadows, that traced it out; the ceremonies, which depicted it; and, by the pomp of the preparations, judge of the dignity of the ſubſtance prepared.

Go, learn it on mount Calvary. Hear the thunder, ſee the lightning, that fall on the head of Jeſus Chriſt. Behold his blood pouring out upon the earth, and him, your Saviour, drinking the bitter cup of divine diſpleaſure. See his hands and his feet nailed to the croſs, and his whole body one great wound; obſerve the unbridled populace foaming with rage around the croſs, and glutting their ſavage ſouls with his barbarous ſufferings; and, by the horror of the cauſes, that contributed to his death, judge of the death itſelf.

Go to the infidel, and let him teach you the dignity of the ſacrifice of Chriſt. Remember, on this account he attacks chriſtianity, and he hath ſome ſhew of reaſon for doing ſo; for if this religion may be attacked on any ſide, with the leaſt hope of ſucceſs, it is on this. The truths of the chriſtian religion are inconteſtible: but if there be any one article of the goſpel, which requires an entire docility of mind, an abſolute ſubmiſſion of heart, a perfect deference to God, who ſpeaks, it is the article of the ſacrifice of the croſs.

Weigh

Weigh the objections, and, by the greatneſs of the difficulties, judge of the dignity of the myſtery. SERM. III.

Recollect, Chriſtian! God thought fit to require the blood of his ſon for the redemption of our ſouls. Theſe ſouls muſt have been very precious in the ſight of God, ſince he redeemed them at a price ſo immenſe. The miſery, into which they were liable to be plunged, muſt have been extremely terrible, ſince God thought proper to make ſuch great efforts to ſave them from it. The felicity, of which they are capable, and to which the Lord intends to elevate them, muſt be infinitely valuable, ſince it coſt him ſo much to bring them to it. For what in the univerſe is of equal value with the blood of the ſon of God? Diſappear, all ye other miracles, wrought in favour of our ſouls! ye aſtoniſhing prodigies, that confirmed the goſpel! thou, delay of the conſummation of all things! ye great and terrible ſigns of the ſecond coming of the Son of God! Vaniſh before the miracle of the croſs, for the croſs ſhines you all into darkneſs and ſhade. This glorious light makes your glimmering vaniſh, and after my imagination is filled with the tremendous dignity of this ſacrifice, I can ſee nothing great beſide. But, if God, if this juſt appraiſer of things, hath eſtimated our ſouls at ſuch a rate, ſhall we ſet a low price on them? If he hath given ſo much for them, do we imagine, we can give too much for them? If, for their redemption, he hath ſacrificed the moſt valuable perſon in heaven, do we imagine, there is any thing upon earth too great to give up for them?

No, No, my brethren! what after we have heard, we ought to believe, that there is no ſhadow of exaggeration in this exclamation of Jeſus Chriſt, *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul!* I do not certainly know what our Saviour meant to ſay, whether he intended to ſpeak of a man, who ſhould *gain the whole world*, and inſtantly *loſe his ſoul*; or of one, who ſhould not *loſe his ſoul* till long after

SERM. III. after he had obtained *the whole world*, and had reigned over it through the courſe of a long life. But I do know, that the words are true, even in the moſt extenſive ſenſe. Suppoſe a man, who ſhould not only enjoy univerſal empire for one whole age: but for a period equal to the duration of the world itſelf; the propoſition, that is implied in the words of Jeſus Chriſt, is applicable to him. Such a ſoul as we have deſcribed, a ſoul ſo excellent in its nature, ſo extenſive in its duration, ſo precious through its redemption; a ſoul capable of acquiring ſo much knowledge, of conceiving ſo many deſires, of experiencing ſo much remorſe, of feeling ſo many pleaſures and pains; a ſoul, that muſt ſubſiſt beyond all time, and perpetuate itſelf to eternity; a ſoul redeemed by the blood of the Son of God; a ſoul ſo valuable ought to be preferred before all things, and nothing is too precious to be given for its exchange. *What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or, what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

However, my brethren, we are willing to acknowledge, were we in the caſe ſuppoſed by Jeſus Chriſt; were it in our power to gain the whole world by loſing our own ſouls; or, being actually univerſal monarchs, were we obliged to ſacrifice this vaſt empire to recover our ſouls already loſt; were we, being ſmitten with the ſplendid offer, or being alarmed at the immenſe price of our purchaſe, to prefer the whole world before our own ſouls, we might then, if not exculpate our conduct, yet at leaſt give a little colour to it; if we could not gain our cauſe, we might however plead it with ſome ſhew of reaſon. A reaſon of ſtate, a political motive, as that of governing a whole univerſe, would naturally have ſome influence over us. The titles of Sovereign, Monarch, Emperor, would naturally charm little ſouls, like ours. Sumptuous palaces, ſuperb equipages, a crowd of devoted courtiers, bowing and cringing before us, and all that exterior grandeur,

grandeur, which environs the princes of the earth, would naturally faſcinate ſuch feeble eyes, and infatuate ſuch puerile imaginations as ours. I repeat it again, could we obtain the government of the univerſe by the ſale of our ſouls, if we could not juſtify our conduct, we might extenuate the guilt of it; and although we could not gain our cauſe, we might at leaſt plead it with ſome ſhew of reaſon. SERM. III.

But is this our caſe? Is it in our power to *gain the whole world?* Is this the price, at which we ſell our ſouls? O ſhame of human nature! O meanneſs of ſoul, more proper to confound us, than any thing elſe, with which we can be reproached! This intelligent ſoul, this immortal ſoul, this ſoul, which has been thought worthy of redemption by the blood of the Saviour of the world, this ſoul we often part with for nothing, and for leſs than nothing! In our condition, placed as moſt of us are, in a ſtate of mediocrity; when by diſſipation and indolence, by injuſtice and iniquity, by malice and obſtinacy, we ſhall have procured from vice all the rewards, that we can expect, what ſhall we have gained? Cities? Provinces? Kingdoms? a long and proſperous reign? God hath not left theſe to our choice. His love would not ſuffer him to expoſe us to a temptation ſo violent. Accordingly we put up our ſouls at a lower price. See this old man, rather dead than alive, bowing under his age, ſtooping down, and ſtepping into the grave, at what price does he exchange his ſoul? at the price of a few days of a dying life; a few pleaſures, ſmothered under a pile of years, if I may ſpeak ſo, and buried under the ice of old age. That officer in the army, who thinks, he alone underſtands real grandeur, at what rate does he value his ſoul? He loſes it for the ſake of the falſe glory of ſwearing expertly, and of uniting blaſphemy and politeneſs. What does yon mechanic get for his ſoul? One acre of land, a cottage bigger and leſs inconvenient than that of his neighbour.

SERM. III. Unmanly wretches! If we be bent on renouncing our dignity, let us, however, keep up ſome appearance of greatneſs. Sordid ſouls! if we will reſign our nobleſt pretenſions, let us do it, however, in favour of ſome other pretenſions, that are real. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this! and be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water.* Do ye perceive, my brethren, the force of this complaint, which God anciently uttered over his people the Jews, and which he now utters over us? Neither genius, nor erudition, can explain it. Could they, ye might perhaps underſtand it. A certain elevation, a certain dignity of ſoul, ſingular ſentiments of heart, are the only expoſitors of theſe affecting words. Therefore, I fear, they are unintelligible to moſt of you. *Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this! and be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water.* God loves us, he deſires we ſhould love him. He has done every thing to conciliate our eſteem. For us he ſent his ſon into the world. For us he diſarmed death. For us he opened an eaſy path to a glorious eternity. And all theſe, to render himſelf maſter of our hearts, and to engage us to return him love for love, life for life. We reſiſt all theſe attractives, we prefer other objects before him. No matter, he would paſs this ingratitude, if the objects, which we prefer before him, were capable of making us happy; if, at leaſt, they bore any apparent proportion to them, which he offereth to our hopes. But what arouſeth his diſpleaſure, what provokes his juſt indignation, what excites reproaches, that would cleave our hearts aſunder, were they capable of feeling, is the vanity of the objects, which we prefer before him. The ſoul, in exchange for which the whole world would not be a ſufficient conſideration, this ſoul we

Jer. ii. 12.

often

often give for the moſt mean, the moſt vile, the moſt contemptible part of the world. *O ye heavens! be aſtoniſhed at this, at this be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water.* SERM. III.

But do we know, ungrateful that we are, do we know, that if the hardneſs of our hearts prevent our feeling in particular the energy of this reproof, and in general the evidence of the reflections, that make the ſubſtance of this diſcourſe; do we know, that a day will come, when we ſhall feel them in all their force? Do we know, that there is now a place, where the truth of our text appears in a clear, but a terrible light? Yes, my brethren, this reflection is perhaps eſſential to our diſcourſe, this, perhaps, approaches neareſt to the meaning of Jeſus Chriſt; perhaps Jeſus Chriſt, in theſe words, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* meant to inform us of the diſpoſition of a man in deſpair, who, immerſed in all the miſeries, that can excruciate a ſoul, ſurprized at having parted with ſuch a ſoul at a price ſo ſmall, ſtricken with the enormous crime of loſing it, wiſhes, but too late, to give every thing to recover it.

Ideas, like theſe, we never propoſe to you without reluctance. Motives of another kind ſhould ſuffice for chriſtians. Learn the worth of your ſouls. Enter into the plan of your creator, who created them capable of eternal felicity; and into that of your redeemer, who died to enable you to arrive at it. Againſt all the deceitful promiſes, which the world, the fleſh, and the devil uſe to ſeduce you, oppoſe theſe words of Jeſus Chriſt, *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Or, what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* May God inſpire you with theſe noble ſentiments! To him be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON IV.

REAL LIBERTY.

SERMON IV.

REAL LIBERTY.

SERMON IV.

REAL LIBERTY.

JOHN viii. 36.

If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.

MY brethren, there were many myſteries in the Jewiſh feaſt of the Jubilee. It was a joyful feſtival to the whole nation: but none celebrated it with higher tranſports than ſlaves. No condition could be more deplorable than that of theſe unhappy people, and, notwithſtanding the lenitives, that the jewiſh juriſprudence mixed with their ſufferings, their condition was always conſidered as the moſt miſerable, to which men can be reduced. The jubilee day was a day of univerſal enfranchiſement. All ſlaves, even they, who had refuſed to embrace the privileges of the ſabbatic year, their wives, and their children, were ſet at liberty.

Should I affirm, my brethren, that no ſlave among them had more intereſt in this feſtival, than ye have, perhaps ye would exclaim againſt my propoſition. Probably, ye would ſay to me, as ſome of them ſaid to Jeſus Chriſt, *We were never in bondage to any man.* But undeceive yourſelves. The jubilee was inſtituted not only to moderate the authority of maſters, and to comfort ſlaves: but God had greater deſigns in appointing it. Hear the myſtical deſign of it. *The Spirit of the Lord God* Iſai. lxi. 1, 2.

SERM. IV. *God is upon me, becauſe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.* Who
Luke iv. ſpeaks in this prophecy of Iſaiah? Had not Jeſus Chriſt anſwered this queſtion in the ſynagogue at Nazareth,
1 Pet. ii. 25. ye ſheep of the *chief ſhepherd, and biſhop of your ſouls!* ſhould ye not have known his voice?

Come, my brethren, come, behold to day with what preciſe accuracy, or rather, with what pomp and majeſty he hath fulfilled this prophecy, and broken your chains in pieces. Do not diſdain to follow the reflections, that we are going to make on theſe words, which proceeded from his ſacred mouth, *If the Son make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.* O may this language inſpire us with the noble ambition of terminating our ſlavery! May ſlaves of prejudice, of paſſion, and of death, quit their ſhameful bonds, enjoy *the acceptable year of the*
Rom. viii. 21. *Lord*, and partake of *the glorious liberty of the children of God!* Amen.

If the Son ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed. In order to explain theſe words, it will be neceſſary to relate the occaſion of them, and to explain, at leaſt in part, the diſcourſe, from which they are taken.

ver. 20. *Jeſus Chriſt ſpoke theſe words in the treaſury*, that is to ſay, in a court of the temple, which was called *the women's porch*, becauſe women were allowed to enter it. This court was alſo called *the treaſury*, becauſe it contained thirteen tubes like trumpets for the reception of public contributions. Jeſus Chriſt is ſuppoſed to al-
Mat. vi. 2. lude to the form of theſe, when he ſays, *When thou doeſt thine alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee.* Each of theſe tubes had a different inſcription on it, according to the different contributions, for the reception of which they were placed, either charitable contributions for the relief of the poor, or votive for the diſcharge of a vow, or ſuch as were preſcribed by ſome particular law. In this court ſat Jeſus Chriſt obſerving what each gave to the poor. In this place he abſolved

ſolved a woman caught in adultery, and confounded her accuſers, whoſe great zeal againſt her was excited more by the barbarous deſire of ſhedding the blood of the criminal, than by the horror of the crime. To puniſh thoſe vices in others, of which the puniſher is guilty, is a diſpoſition equally oppoſite to benevolence and equity. It was a received opinion among the Jews, that the waters of jealouſy had no effect on an adulterous wife, whoſe huſband had been guilty of the ſame crime. Jeſus Chriſt perhaps referred to this opinion, when he ſaid to the Phariſees, *He, that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her.* ver. 7.

SERM. IV.

I ſuppoſe this woman not to have been one of thoſe, who live in open adultery, who know not what it is to bluſh, who not only commit this crime, but even glory in it. I ſuppoſe her a penitent, and that ſentiments of true repentance acquired her the protection of him, who *came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.* Mat. ix. 13.

Yet the indulgence of our Saviour ſeemed to be a ſubverſion of the Moſaic law, which condemned them to death, who were guilty of adultery. Nothing could be leſs likely to conciliate the minds of the Jews to Jeſus Chriſt, than the infraction of a religion, the origin of which was divine, and which no perſon could alter without incurring the moſt rigorous penalties; *ye ſhall not add unto the word which I command you,* ſaid the ſupreme legiſlator, *neither ſhall ye diminiſh ought from it. To the law, and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.* Accordingly we find, one of the moſt ſpecious accuſations, that was ever invented againſt Jeſus Chriſt; and one of the moſt pardonable ſcruples, which ſome devout ſouls had about following him, aroſe from this conſideration, that on ſome occaſions he had relaxed thoſe laws, which no mortal had a right to alter; *this man* is not of God, ſaid ſome, *becauſe he keepeth not the ſabbath-day.*

Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22. ii. 4. Iſai. viii. 20. John ix. 16.

SERM. IV. This conduct certainly required an apology. Jeſus Chriſt muſt needs juſtify a right, which he claimed, but which no man before him had attempted to claim. This is the true clue of the diſcourſe, from which our text is taken. Jeſus Chriſt there proves, that he is the ſupreme law-giver; that although the eternal laws of right and wrong, which proceeded from him, are invariable, yet the poſitive inſtitutes, that depended on the will of the legiſlator, and derived all their authority from his revealed command, might be continued, or abrogated at his pleaſure. He there demonſtrates of the whole levitical ritual what he elſewhere ſaid of one part of it, *the Son of man is Lord of the ſabbath.*

Mat. xii. 8.

He begins his diſcourſe in this manner, I am *the light of the world.* In the ſtyle of the Jews, and, to ſay more, in the ſtyle of the inſpired writers, *light*, by excellence, *Son of God*, *word of God*, *God's Shekinah*, as the Jews ſpeak, that is to ſay, *the habitation of God* among men, *Deity* itſelf, are ſynonimous terms. Witneſs, among many other proofs, the majeſtic frontiſpiece of the goſpel of S. John, the magnificent titles, which he gives the adorable perſonage, of whom he writes. *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made, that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us.* Remark theſe words, *dwelt among us*, the phraſe alludes to the Shekinah, which, many Jewiſh Rabbies ſay, was the Meſſiah.

John i. 1, &c.

What Jeſus Chriſt affirms being granted, that is, that he was THE LIGHT by excellence, no apology is needful; for he had a right to abſolve a woman, whom Moſes, by the order of God, had condemned to die. The authority of inferior judges is limited to the execution of thoſe laws, which the ſupreme legiſlature appoints. Sovereign princes have reſerved the prerogative of

ſhewing

ſhewing mercy. The Phariſees foreſaw the conſequen- SERM.
ces of admitting the title, that he claimed, and there- IV.
fore they diſputed his right to claim it; *Thou beareſt* viii. 12.
record of thyſelf, ſay they, *thy record is not true.*

This objection would naturally ariſe in the mind. It ſeems to be founded on this inconteſtible principle, No envoy from heaven, the Meſſiah hiſſelf not excepted, has a right to require ſubmiſſion to his deciſions, unleſs he give proofs of his miſſion. All implicit faith in men, who have not received divine credentials, or who refuſe to produce them, is not faith, but puerile credulity, groſs ſuperſtition.

But the Phariſees, who made this objection, did not make it for the ſake of obtaining evidence; and Jeſus Chriſt reproves them for this duplicity. If ye continue in doubt of my miſſion, ſaid he to them, it is your own fault, your infidelity can only proceed from your criminal paſſions, *ye judge after the fleſh.* If ye would 15.
ſuſpend theſe paſſions, ye would ſoon perceive, that the holineſs of my life gives me a right to bear witneſs in my own cauſe; for *which of you convinceth me of ſin?* 46.
Ye would ſoon ſee, that my teſtimony is confirmed by that of my father, who, when he ſent me into the world, armed me with his omnipotence, which diſplays itſelf in my miracles, *He, that ſent me, is with me, the* 29.
Father hath not left me alone. But the hatred, that you bear to me, prevents your ſeeing the attributes of my Father in me, *ye neither know me, nor* my *Father.* 19.
However, I will not yet juſtify my miſſion by inflicting thoſe puniſhments on you, which your obſtinacy deſerves, *I judge no man*; nor will I perform the office of a judge, till I have finiſhed that of a redeemer. When ye have filled up the meaſure of your ſins, by obtaining a decree for my crucifixion, ye ſhall be forced to acknowledge under that iron rod, which the Father hath given me to deſtroy my enemies, the divinity of a miſſion, that your wilful obſtinacy now diſputes, *when ye have lifted up the Son of man, then ſhall* 28.
ye know that I am he.

SERM. IV. Arguments ſo powerful, threatnings ſo terrible, made deep impreſſions on the minds of ſome of our Lord's hearers, and to them, who felt the force of what was
31. ſaid, Jeſus Chriſt added, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed; and ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.*

I ſuppoſe, among the people, to whom theſe words were addreſſed, were ſome of the diſciples of Judas of Gaulon a city of Galilee, who for this reaſon was called Judas the Gaulonite. Theſe ſeditious people ſuppoſed, that in order to be a good Jew, it was neceſſary to be a bad ſubject of the emperor. They were always ripe for rebellion againſt the Romans, and they reproached thoſe of their countrymen, who quietly ſubmitted to theſe tyrants of mankind, with degenerating from the noble ſpirit of their anceſtors. This opinion, I think, places their anſwer to Jeſus Chriſt in the cleareſt light.
33. *We are*, ſay they, *Abraham's ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man: how ſayeſt thou, Ye ſhall be made free?* Had they ſpoken of the whole nation, how durſt they have affirmed, after the well known ſubjection of their country to ſo many different conquerors, *we were never in bondage to any man?*

Jeſus turned their attention from the literal to the ſpiritual meaning of his promiſe. He told them, there were bonds more ſhameful than thoſe, which Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar had formerly put on their fathers, more humiliating than thoſe, to which the Romans obliged the nation at the time of his ſpeaking to ſubmit; bonds, with which ſin loaded its ſlaves, chains, which they theirſelves actually wore, while they ima-
34. gined they were free; *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you, Whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin.* Jeſus Chriſt intended to inform them, that, although God had patiently treated them to that time as his children in his church, he would ſhortly expel them as ſlaves, and deal with them not as the legitimate children of Abraham:

but

but as the ſons of Hagar, of whom it had been ſaid, as St. Paul remarks, *Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon; for the ſon of the bond-woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman.* SERM. IV. Gal. iv. 30.

But while he undeceived them concerning that imaginary liberty, which, they flattered themſelves, they enjoyed, he announced real liberty to them, and after he had given them moſt mortifying ideas of their condition, he declared, that he alone could free them from it; this is the ſenſe of my text, *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.* Some interpreters think, there is in theſe words an alluſion to a cuſtom among the Greeks, with whom a preſumptive heir had a right of adopting brethren, and of freeing ſlaves.

I will neither undertake to prove the fact, nor the conſequence inferred from it; but it is clear, that the title of *Son* by excellence, which Jeſus Chriſt claims in this place, entirely correſponds with the end, that I have aſſigned to this whole diſcourſe, that is, to juſtify that pre-eminence over Moſes, which he had aſſumed; and to prove that he might without uſurpation, or, as St. Paul expreſſes it, without *thinking it robbery*, act as ſupreme legiſlator, and pardon a woman, whom the law of Moſes condemned to die. A paſſage in the epiſtle to the Hebrews will confirm this ſenſe of our text. Jeſus Chriſt *was counted worthy of more glory than Moſes, inaſmuch as he, who hath builded the houſe, hath more honour than the houſe. He, that built all things, is God. Moſes was faithful in all his houſe as a ſervant. But Chriſt as a ſon over his own houſe.* This is the *Son* by excellence, the *Son*, of whom it was ſaid, when he came into the world, *Let all the angels of God worſhip him.* This *Son*, this *God*, who *built the houſe*; this *Son*, this *God*, who is the maker and Lord of all things; this is he, to whom alone it appertains to free us from the dominion of ſin, and to put us into the poſſeſſion of true and real liberty. *If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.* Phil ii. 6. Heb. iii. 3, 4, &c. i. 6.

Here

SERM. IV. Here let us finiſh this analyſis, and let me hope, that its utility will ſufficiently apologize for its length, and let us employ our remaining time in attending to reflections of another kind, by which we ſhall more fully enter into the views of our bleſſed Saviour.

I. I will endeavour to give you a diſtinct idea of liberty.

II. I ſhall prove that liberty is incompatible with ſin, and that a ſinner is a real ſlave.

III. I ſhall lead you to the great redeemer of ſinners, and I ſhall prove the propoſition, which I have choſen for my text, *If the Son ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

I. What is *Liberty?* Liberty, I think, may be conſidered in five different points of view. The firſt regards the underſtanding. The ſecond reſpects the will. The third relates to the conſcience. The fourth belongs to the conduct, and the fifth to the condition.

1. The liberty of man in regard to his *underſtanding* conſiſts in a power of ſuſpending his judgment, till he has conſidered any object in contemplation on every ſide, ſo that he may yield only to evidence. A ſuſpenſion of judgment is a power adapted to the limited ſphere, in which finite creatures are confined. God, who is an infinite ſpirit, hath not this kind of liberty; it is incompatible with the eminence of his perfections; the ideas, that he had of creatures before their exiſtence, were the models, according to which they were created. He perceives at once all objects in every point of view. He ſees the whole with evidence, and, as evidence carries conſent along with it, he is glorioufly incapable of doubt, and of ſuſpending his judgment.

It is not ſo with finite minds, particularly with minds ſo limited as ours. We hardly know any thing, we are hardly capable of knowing any thing. Our very deſire of increaſing our knowledge, if we be not very cautious, will lead us into frequent and fatal miſtakes, by hurrying us to determine a point before we have well

well examined it; we ſhall take probability for de- SERM.
monſtration, a ſpark for a blaze, an appearance for a IV.
reality. A liberty of ſuſpending our judgment is the only mean of preventing this misfortune; it does not ſecure us from ignorance: but it keeps us from error. While I enjoy the liberty of affirming only that, of which I have full evidence, I enjoy the liberty of not deceiving myſelf.

Farther, the deſire of knowing is one of the moſt natural deſires of man, and one of the moſt eſſential to his happineſs. By man I mean him, who remains human; for there are ſome men, who have renounced humanity. There are men, who, like brutes, incloſed in a narrow circle of ſenſations, never aſpire to improve their faculty of intelligence any farther, than as its improvement is neceſſary to the ſenſual enjoyment of a few groſs gratifications, in which all their felicity is contained. But man hath a natural avidity of extending the ſphere of his knowledge. I think, God commanded our firſt parents to reſtrain this deſire, becauſe it was one of their moſt eager wiſhes. Accordingly, the moſt dangerous allurement, that Satan uſed to withdraw them from their obedience to God, was this of ſcience; *ye* Gen. iii.
ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil. The ſtate of 5.
innocence was a very happy ſtate; however, it was a ſtate of trial, to the perfection of which ſomething was wanting. In every diſpenſation, God ſo ordered it, that man ſhould arrive at the chief good by way of ſacrifice, and by the ſacrifice of that, which mankind holds moſt dear; and this was the reaſon of the primitive prohibition. *The Lord God ſaid, Of every tree of the gar-* ii. 16. 17.
den thou may'ſt freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou ſhalt not eat; for in the day, that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die. I preſume, had man properly borne this trial, he would have been rewarded with that privilege, the uſurpation of which was ſo fatal to him.

SERM. IV. A mind, naturally eager to obtain knowledge, is not really free, if it have not the liberty of touching the tree of knowledge, and of deriving from the ſource of truth an ability to judge clearly, particularly of thoſe objects, with the knowledge of which its happineſs is connected. Without this the garden of Eden could not ſatisfy me; without this all the delicious pleaſures of that bleſſed abode would leave a void in the plan of my felicity, and I ſhould always ſuſpect, that God entertained but a ſmall degree of love for me, becauſe he repoſed no confidence in me. This idea deſerves the greater regard, becauſe it is an idea, that Jeſus Chriſt taught his apoſtles, *Henceforth I call you not ſervants; for the ſervant knoweth not what his Lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things, that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.*

John xv. 15.

2. I call that *volition* free, which is in *perfect harmony with an enlightened underſtanding*, in oppoſition to that, which is under the influence of irregular paſſions condemned by the underſtanding. The ſlavery of a will, that hath not the liberty of following what the underſtanding offers to it as advantageous, is ſo incompatible with our notion of volition, that ſome doubt, and others poſitively deny the poſſibility of ſuch a bondage. Not to decide this queſtion at preſent, it is certain, one of the moſt common artifices of a will under the influence of inordinate affections is to ſeduce the underſtanding, and to engage it in a kind of compoſition with it. Any truth conſidered in a certain point of view may ſeem a falſhood, as any falſhood in a certain point of light may appear a truth. The moſt advantageous condition, conſidered in ſome relations, will appear diſadvantageous, as the moſt inconvenient will ſeem advantageous. A will under the influence of diſorderly deſires ſollicits the judgment to preſent the evil object of its wiſhes in a light, in which it may appear good. That will then I call free, which is in perfect harmony with an enlightened underſtanding, following

following it with docility, free from the irregular de- SERM. IV.
ſire of blinding its guide, I mean of ſeducing the judgment.

Perhaps I ought to have obſerved, before I entered on a diſcuſſion of the judgment and the will, that theſe are not two different ſubjects: but the ſame ſubject, conſidered under two different faces. We are obliged, in order to form compleat ideas of the human ſoul, to conſider its divers operations. When it thinks, when it conceives, when it draws concluſions, we ſay it judges, it underſtands, it is the *underſtanding:* when it fears, when it loves, when it deſires, we call it volition, *will.* We apply to this ſubject what St. Paul ſays of another, *there are diverſities of operations: but it is the ſame ſpirit.* 1 Cor. xii. 6.

3. As we give different names to the ſame ſpirit on account of its different operations, ſo alſo we give it different names on account of different objects of the ſame operations. And as we call the ſoul by different names, when it thinks, and when it deſires, ſo alſo we give it different names, when it performs operations made up of judging and deſiring. What we call *conſcience* verifies this remark. Conſcience is, if I may venture to ſpeak ſo, an operation of the ſoul conſiſting of volition and intelligence. Conſcience is intelligence, judgment, conſidering an object as juſt or unjuſt; and conſcience is volition inclining us to make the object in contemplation an object of our love or hatred, of our deſires or fears.

If ſuch be the nature of conſcience, what we have affirmed of the liberty of the will in general, and of the liberty of the underſtanding in general, ought to determine what we are to underſtand by the freedom of the conſcience. Conſcience is free in regard to the underſtanding, when it hath means of obtaining clear ideas of the juſtice, or injuſtice of a caſe before it, and when it hath the power of ſuſpending its deciſions on a caſe till it hath well examined it. Conſcience is free in re-

SERM. IV. gard to the will, when it hath the power of following what appears juſt, and of avoiding every thing, that appears contrary to the laws of right. This article, we hope, is ſufficiently explained.

4. But it ſometimes happens, that our will, and our conſcience incline us to objects, which our underſtanding preſents to them as advantageous: but from the poſſeſſion of which ſome ſuperior power prevents us. A man is not really free, unleſs he have power over his ſenſes ſufficient to make them obey the dictates of a cool volition directed by a clear perception. This is liberty in regard to our *conduct*.

There is ſomething truly aſtoniſhing in that compoſition, which we call *man*. In him we ſee an union of two ſubſtances, between which there is no natural relation, at leaſt we know none, I mean the union of a ſpiritual ſoul with a material body. I perceive, indeed, a natural connection between the divers faculties of the ſoul, between the faculty of thinking, and that of loving. I perceive, indeed, a natural connection between the divers properties of matter, between extenſion and diviſibility, and ſo of the reſt. I clearly perceive, that becauſe an intelligence thinks, it muſt love, and becauſe matter is extended, it muſt be diviſible, and ſo on.

But what relation can there ſubſiſt between a little particle of matter and an immaterial ſpirit, to render it of neceſſity, that every thought of this ſpirit muſt inſtantly excite ſome motion in this particle of matter? and how is it, that every motion of this particle of matter muſt excite ſome idea, or ſome ſenſation, in this ſpirit? yet this ſtrange union of body and ſpirit conſtitutes man. God, ſay ſome, having brought into exiſtence a creature ſo excellent as an immortal ſoul, leſt it ſhould be dazzled with its own excellence, united it to dead matter incapable of ideas and deſigns.

I dare not pretend to penetrate into the deſigns of an infinite God. Much leſs would I have the audacity to ſay to my Creator, *Why haſt thou made me thus?*

Rom. ix. 20.

But

But I can never think myſelf free while that, which is leaſt excellent in me, governs that part of me, which is moſt excellent. Ah! what freedom do I enjoy, while the deſires of my will, guided by the light of my underſtanding, cannot give law to my body; while my ſenſes become legiſlators to my underſtanding and my will? SERM. IV.

5. It only remains, in order to form a clear notion of a man truly free, that we conſider him in regard to his *condition*, that is to ſay, whether he be rich or poor, enveloped in obſcurity or expoſed to the public eye, depreſſed with ſickneſs or regaled with health; and in like manner of the other conditions of life.

I do not think, that any man is really free in regard to his condition, unleſs he have the liberty of chooſing that kind of life, which ſeems the moſt advantageous to him. Solomon was free in this reſpect, when he had that pleaſing dream, in which God preſented all the bleſſings of this world to his view, and gave him his choice of all. A man, on the contrary, is a ſlave, when circumſtances confine him in a condition contrary to his felicity, when, while he wiſhes to live, he is forced to die, when, while he lingers to die, death flies from him, and he is obliged to live.

My taſk now is almoſt finiſhed, at leaſt, as well as I can finiſh a plan ſo extenſive in ſuch narrow limits as are preſcribed to me. My firſt point explains the two others, that follow. Having given clear ideas of liberty, it naturally follows, that liberty is incompatible with ſin, and that a ſinner is a real ſlave. A ſlave in regard to his underſtanding; a ſlave in regard to his will; a ſlave in regard to his conſcience; a ſlave in regard to his conduct; a ſlave in regard to his condition. A ſmall knowledge of chriſtianity is ſufficient now to prove, that Jeſus Chriſt alone can terminate theſe various ſlaveries, he only can juſtify the propoſition in the text, *If the Son ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

Is a ſinner free in his underſtanding, hath he the liberty of ſuſpending his judgment, he, whoſe ſenſes

SERM. IV. always confine him to ſenſible objects, and always divert him from the ſtudy of truth? Is he free whoſe underſtanding is continually ſollicited by an irregular will, and by a depraved conſcience, to diſguiſe the truth from them, to give them falſe notions of juſt and unjuſt, to preſent every object to them in that point of view, which is moſt proper to favour their irregularity and corruption? Can he be called free, who *receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, becauſe they appear fooliſhneſs to him?*

1 Cor. ii. 14.

Is a ſinner free in his will, and in his conſcience, he who, his underſtanding being ſeduced by them, yields to whatever they require, judgeth in favour of the moſt frivolous deciſions, and approves the moſt extravagant projects; can ſuch a man be called free?

Is a ſinner free in his conduct, he, who finds in an inflexibility of his organs, in an impetuoſity of his humours, in an irregular flow of his ſpirits, obſtacles ſufficient to prevent him from following the deciſions of his underſtanding, the reſolutions of his will, the dictates of his conſcience? Is he free in his conduct, who, like the fabulous, or perhaps the real Medea, groans under the arbitrary dominion of his ſenſes, ſees and approves of the beſt things, and follows the worſt? Is the original of this portrait, drawn by the hand of an Apoſtle, free, *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I ſee another law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members?*

Rom. vii. 21.

Is he free in his conduct, whoſe eyes ſparkle, whoſe face turns pale, whoſe mouth foams at the ſight of a man, who perhaps may have offended him: but for whoſe offence the God of love demands a pardon? Is he free in his conduct, who, whenever he ſees an object fatal to his innocence, not only loſes a power of reſiſtance, and a liberty of flying: but even ceaſes to think, has hardly courage to call in the aid of his own feeble

feeble virtue, forgets his reſolutions, his prayers, and his vows, and plunges into diſorders, at which his reaſon bluſhes, even while he immerſes himſelf in them? SERM. IV.

O how neceſſary to us is the religion of Jeſus Chriſt! how fit to rectify the irregularities of nature! how needful the ſuccours of his holy ſpirit to lead us into the genius of religion! *If the Son make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed.*

If the Son make you free, you ſhall be free indeed in regard to your underſtanding, becauſe, Jeſus Chriſt being the Angel of the divine preſence, the wiſdom, that conceives the counſels of God, and the word, that directs them, he perfectly knows them, and, when he pleaſes, he reveals them to others. By that univerſal empire, which he hath acquired by his profound ſubmiſſion to the will of his Father, he will calm thoſe ſenſes, which divert your underſtanding from the ſtudy of truth, and precipitate your judgment into error; he will direct thy will not to ſeduce it; and will forbid thine erroneous conſcience to impoſe its illuſions upon it.

If the Son make you free, you will be free indeed in your will and conſcience, becauſe your underſtanding, directed by a light divine, will regulate the maxims, that guide them, not by ſuggeſtions of concupiſcence, but by invariable laws of right and wrong; it will preſent to them (to uſe the language of ſcripture) not *bitter* for *ſweet*, and *ſweet* for *bitter*, not *good* for *evil*, and *evil* for *good*: but each object in its own true point of light. Iſai. v. 20.

If the Son make you free, you ſhall be free indeed in your conduct, becauſe by the irreſiſtible aid of his ſpirit he will give you dominion over thoſe ſenſes, to which you have been a ſlave; becauſe his almighty ſpirit will calm your humours, attemper your blood, moderate the impetuoſity of your ſpirits, reſtore to your ſoul its primitive ſuperiority, ſubject your conſtitution entirely to your reaſon, render reaſon by a ſupernatural power lord of the whole man, make you love to live by its dictates, and teach you to ſay, while you yield to its force,

SERM. IV. force, *O Lord! thou haſt allured me, and I was allured: thou art ſtronger than I, and haſt prevailed.*

Jer. xx. 7. *If the Son make you free, you ſhall be free indeed* in all your actions, and in all your faculties, becauſe he will put on you an eaſy yoke, that will terminate your ſlavery, conſtitute your real freedom, render you a citizen of *Jeruſalem above*, which is a *free* city, and *mother of all* the ſons of freedom.

Gal. iv. 26.

I ſaid laſtly, a ſinner is a ſlave in regard to his condition. We obſerved, that a man was not free in regard to his condition, unleſs he could chooſe that kind of life, which ſeemed to him moſt ſuitable to his felicity. And, is not a ſinner, think ye, a real ſlave in this ſenſe? Indeed, if there remain in him any notion of true felicity, he ought to give himſelf very little concern, whether he ſpend his days in riches or poverty, in ſplendor or obſcurity; for the duration of each is extremely ſhort. Theſe things, unleſs we be entirely blind, are very diminutive objects, even in a plan of ſinful earthly pleaſure. But to be obliged to die, when there are numberleſs reaſons to fear death, and to be forced to live, when there are nnmberleſs reaſons for lothing life, this is a ſtate of the moſt frightful ſlavery, and this is abſolutely the ſlaviſh ſtate of a ſinner.

The ſinner is forced to die, in ſpite of numberleſs reaſons to fear death; he is in this world as in a priſon, the decorations of which may perhaps beguile him into an inattention to his real condition: but it is a priſon, however, which he muſt quit, as ſoon as the moment arrives, which the ſupreme legiſlator has appointed for his execution. And how can he free himſelf from this dreadful neceſſity? Faſt bound by the gout, the gravel, the benumbing aches, and the numerous infirmities of old age, the bare names of which compoſe immenſe volumes, and all which drag him to death, how can he free himſelf from that law, which binds him over to ſuffer death? One art only can be invented to prevent his falling into deſpair

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in a ſtate of impriſonment, the iſſue of which is ſo formidable; that is, to ſtun himſelf with noiſe, buſineſs, and pleaſure, like thoſe madmen, to whom human juſtice allows a few hours to prepare themſelves to appear before divine juſtice, and who employ thoſe few hours in drowning their reaſon in wine, leſt they ſhould tremble at the ſight of the ſcaffold, on which their ſentence is to be executed. This is the ſtate of a ſinner: but as ſoon as the noiſe, that ſtuns his ears, ſhall ceaſe; as ſoon as buſineſs, which fills the whole capacity of his ſoul, ſhall be ſuſpended; as ſoon as the charms of thoſe pleaſures, that enchant him, ſhall have ſpent their force; as ſoon as, having recovered reaſon and reflection, this thought preſents itſelf to his mind, ... I muſt die ... I muſt inſtantly die ... he groans under the weight of his chains, his countenance alters, his eyes are fixed with pain, the ſhaking of a leaf makes him tremble, he takes it for his executioner, thundering at the door of his cell, to call him out to appear before his judge. Is it freedom to live under theſe cruel apprehenſions? Is he free, who *through fear of death is all his life time ſubject to bondage?* Heb. ii. 15.

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The condition of a ſinner is ſtill more deplorable, inaſmuch as not being at liberty to exiſt, as he chooſes to exiſt, he hath not the liberty of being annihilated. For, (and this is the ſevereſt part of his ſlavery, and the height of his miſery.) as he is forced to die, when he hath ſo many reaſons to fear death, ſo he is obliged to live, when he hath numberleſs reaſons to wiſh to die; he is not maſter of his own exiſtence. The ſuperior power, that conſtrains him to exiſt, excites in him ſentiments, which in ſcripture-ſtyle are called, *ſeeking death, and not finding it*; *curſing the day of birth*; ſaying to the *mountains, Cover us*; *and to the hills, Fall on us*; expreſſing deſpair in theſe miſerable requeſts, *Mountains! fall on us*; *rocks! hide us from the face of him, that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand?* Rev. ix. 6. Jer. xx. 14. Rev. vi. 16, 17.

But

SERM. IV.

But what can rocks and mountains do againſt the command of him, of whom it is ſaid, *the mountains ſhall be molten under him, and the valleys ſhall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters, that are poured down a ſteep place, before the Lord of the whole earth.*

Micah i. 4. iv. 13.

Time-ſerver! thou muſt live to expiate the guilt of abjuring the truth, of denying the name of the Lord, of bowing thy knee before the altar of an idol, of neglecting the exterior of religious worſhip, of deſpiſing the ſacraments, of ſacrificing thy whole family to ſuperſtition and error.

Thou grandee of this world! whether thy grandeur be real or imaginary, thou muſt live to expiate the guilt of that pride and arrogance, which has ſo often rendered thee deaf, or inacceſſible to the ſollicitations of thoſe thine inferiors, for whoſe protection providence and ſociety have elevated thee to a rank, which thou art unworthy to hold.

Magiſtrate! thou muſt live to expiate the guilt of thine unrighteous decrees, of thy perverſion of juſtice for the ſake of bribes, of thy ruining widows and orphans to gratify that ſordid avarice, which animates all thine actions.

Paſtor! thou muſt live to expiate the guilt of accommodating thy miniſtry to the paſſions of the great, of *holding the truth in unrighteouſneſs*, of *ſhunning to declare the whole counſel of God*, of opening the kingdom of heaven to thoſe, whom thou oughteſt to have *pulled out of the fire*, and to *have ſaved with fear*, in whoſe ears thou ſhouldſt have thundered theſe terrible words, *Depart, depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Rom. i. 18. Acts xx. 27. Jude 23.

And thou proſtitute, the diſgrace and diſtreſs of thy family! thou muſt live to expiate the guilt of defiling thy bed, the criminality of thine infidelity, and of thy baneful example.

Barbarous parent! thou muſt live. Thou, who haſt ſacrificed thoſe children to the world, who were dedi-

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cated to God in baptiſm, thou muſt live to expiate the guilt of a cruel treachery, which the ſharpeſt language is too gentle to reprove, and the moſt diſmal colours too faint to deſcribe. SERM. IV.

Diſobedient child! thou muſt live. Wicked heart! in which a good education ſeemed to have precluded the contagion of the world, thou muſt live to expiate the guilt of deſpiſing the example of thy pious father, and of forgetting the tender perſuaſive inſtructions of thy holy mother.

Who will terminate this ſlavery? *O wretched man, that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Jeſus Chriſt re-eſtabliſheth the order, that ſin hath ſubverted. Is death the object of our fears? Jeſus Chriſt is the object of our deſires. Is annihilation after death the object of our deſires? Jeſus Chriſt is the object of our fears, or rather, he makes that eternal exiſtence, which we ſhall enjoy after this life, a ground of the moſt tranſporting pleaſure. Rom. vii. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 57.

We do not exceed the truth in ſpeaking thus. How inconſiderable ſoever the number of true chriſtians may be, the number would be leſs conſiderable ſtill, if an entire freedom from the fear of death were eſſential to the chriſtian character. Death is always an evil, an exceeding great evil, even to ſaints of the firſt claſs. Let not this propoſition offend you. Each privilege of redemption is perfectly acquired for us; however, in the preſent œconomy we are not put into the full enjoyment of any one. One privilege, that redemption has procured for us, is a knowledge of the myſteries of God: but who of us knows them thoroughly? Another privilege of redemption is holineſs: but who of us is perfectly holy? One of the privileges of redemption is a moſt cloſe and tender union to God: but where is the chriſtian, who does not find this communion interrupted? All the other privileges of redemption

SERM. IV. are like theſe. It is the ſame with death. Death is vanquiſhed, and we are delivered from its dominion: but the perfect enjoyment of this freedom will not be in this preſent œconomy. Hence St. Paul ſays, *The laſt enemy, that ſhall be deſtroyed, is death.* Death will not be entirely deſtroyed till after the reſurrection, becauſe, although before this great event the ſouls of thoſe, who die in the Lord, enjoy an ineffable happineſs, yet they are in a ſtate of ſeparation from the bodies, to which the creator at firſt united them; while this ſeparation continues, death is not entirely conquered, this ſeparation is one of the trophies of death. The time of triumphing over the enemy is not yet come: but it will arrive in due time, and when ſoul and body are again re-united, we ſhall exclaim with joy, *O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory?*

1 Cor. xv. 26.

55.

Let not the infidel inſult the believer here, let him not treat us as viſionaries, becauſe we pretend to vanquiſh death, while we are vanquiſhed by it. Our prerogatives are real, they are infinitely ſubſtantial, and there is an immenſe difference between thoſe fears, which an idea of death excites in a man, whom ſin hath enſlaved, and thoſe, which it excites in the ſoul of a chriſtian. The one, the man, I mean, whom ſin enſlaves, fears death, becauſe he conſiders it as the end of all his felicity, and the beginning of thoſe puniſhments, to which the juſtice of God condemns him. The other, I mean, the chriſtian, fears death, becauſe it is an evil: but he deſires it, becauſe it is the laſt of thoſe evils, which he is under a neceſſity of ſuffering before he arrives at his chief good. He fears death; he fears the remedies, ſometimes leſs ſupportable than the maladies, to which they are oppoſed; he dreads laſt adieus; violent ſtruggles; dying agonies; and all the other forerunners of death. Sometimes he recoils at the firſt approaches of an enemy ſo formidable, and ſometimes he is tempted to ſay, *O my Father! if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me.* But preſently, penetrating

Mat. xxvi. 39.

trating through all the terrible circumſtances of dying, and diſcovering what follows, he remembers, that death is the fixed point, where all the promiſes of the goſpel meet, the center of all the hopes of the children of God. Filled with faith in theſe promiſes, the ſoul deſires what it juſt now feared, and flies to meet the enemy, that approaches it. SERM. IV.

But Jeſus Chriſt renders annihilation, which was the object of our ſinful deſires, the object of our fears, or rather, as I ſaid before, he makes that eternal exiſtence, which we muſt enjoy after death, the ground of our tranſport and triumph. The happier the condition of the glorified ſaints ſhould be, the more miſerable would it be to apprehend an end of it. Shortneſs of duration is one grand character of vanity inſeparable from the bleſſings of this life. They will make thee happy, thou! whoſe portion is in this life, they will make thee happy, I grant: but thy happineſs will be only for a ſhort time, and this is the character that embitters them. Forget thyſelf, idolatrous mother! forget thyſelf, with that infant in thine arms, who is thine idol: but death will ſhortly tear thee from the child, or the child from thee. Slave to voluptuouſneſs! intoxicate thy ſoul with pleaſure: but preſently death will deſtroy the ſenſes, that tranſmit it to thy heart.

But to feel ourſelves ſupremely happy, and to know that we ſhall be for ever ſo; to enjoy the company of angels, and to know that we ſhall for ever enjoy it; to ſee the redeemer of mankind, and to know that we ſhall behold him for ever; to enjoy the preſence of God, and to be ſure that we ſhall ever enjoy it; to incorporate our exiſtence with that of the being, who neceſſarily exiſts, and our life with that of the immortal God; to anticipate thus, in every indiviſible moment of eternity, the felicity, that ſhall be enjoyed in every inſtant of an eternal duration, (if we may conſider eternal duration as conſiſting of a ſucceſſion of moments.) this is ſupreme felicity, this is one of the

SERM. IV. greateſt privileges of that liberty, which Jeſus Chriſt beſtows on us.

The different ideas, that we have given, are, I think, more than ſufficient to induce us to regard all thoſe with execration, who would tear us from communion with this Jeſus, who procures us advantages ſo ineſtimable. I do not ſpeak only of heretics, and hereſiarchs; I do not ſpeak only of perſecutors and executioners; I ſpeak of the world, I ſpeak of the maxims of the world, I ſpeak of indolence, effeminacy, ſeducing pleaſures, tempters far more formidable than all executioners, perſecutors, heretics, and hereſiarchs. *Who* of them all, *ſhall ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord? Lord! to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life.* To God, Father, Son, and holy Spirit, be honour and glory for ever, Amen.

Rom. viii. 35. 39.
John vi. 68.

SERMON

SERMON V.

The DIVINITY of JESUS CHRIST.

SERMON V.

The DIVINITY of JESUS CHRIST.

REV. V. 11, 12, 13, 14.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſand of thouſands;*

Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory and bleſſing.

And every creature, which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them, heard I, ſaying, Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

And the four living creatures ſaid, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down, and worſhipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

ALTHOUGH Atheiſm and Superſtition are weapons, which have been too ſucceſsfully employed by the Devil againſt the truth, yet are they not his moſt formidable arms, nor the moſt difficult to be reſiſted. It was an exceſs of ſtupidity, which formed ſuperſtition;

* *Beaſts*, in our tranſlation. — *Animaux — animals — living creatures*, more agreeably to the apoſtle's Ζωα, as well as to Ezek. i. 4, 5, &c. to which S. John ſeems to allude. Και ειδον, και ιδου .... εν τω μεσω ως ομοιωμα τεσσαρων ΖΩΩΝ. Septuag.

SERM. V. ſuperſtition; and it was an exceſs of corruption, that forged atheiſm: but a very little knowledge, and a very little integrity, ſufficiently preſerve us from both. Superſtition is ſo diametrically oppoſite to reaſon, that one is ſhocked at ſeeing earth, water, fire, air, minerals, paſſions, maladies, death, men, beaſts, devils themſelves placed by idolaters on the throne of the ſovereign, and elevated to ſupreme honours. Far from feeling a propenſity to imitate a conduct ſo monſtrous, we ſhould hardly believe it, were it not atteſted by the unanimous teſtimonies of hiſtorians and travellers; did we not ſtill ſee in the monuments of antiquity, ſuch altars, ſuch deities, ſuch worſhippers; and did not the chriſtian world, in an age of light and knowledge, madly prove too faithful a guarantee of what animated the heathen world, in ages of darkneſs and ignorance. The ſyſtem of atheiſm is ſo looſe, and its conſequences ſo dreadful and odious, that only ſuch as are determined to loſe themſelves can be loſt in this way. Whether a creator exiſt is a queſtion decided, wherever there is a creature. Without us, within us, in our ſouls, in our bodies, every where, we meet with proofs of a firſt cauſe. An infinite being follows us, and ſurrounds us; *O Lord, thou compaſſeſt my path, and my lying down, thou haſt beſet me behind and before. Whither ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence?*

Pſalm cxxxix. 1. 3. 7.

But there is another claſs of arguments againſt our myſteries, which at firſt preſent themſelves to the mind under a very different aſpect. There is a ſyſtem of error, which, far from appearing to have ignorance for its principle like ſuperſtition, or corruption like atheiſm, ſeems to proceed from the boſom of truth and virtue, and if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, to have been extracted from the very ſubſtance of reaſon and religion. I ſpeak of that ſyſtem, which tends to degrade the Saviour of the world from his divinity, and to rank him with ſimple creatures. There is in appearance a diſtance ſo immenſe, between an infant born in a ſtable,

ſtable, and the *Father of eternity*; between that Jeſus, who converſed with men, and that God, who *upholds all things by the word of his power*; between him, who, being crucified, expired on a croſs, and him, who, ſitting on the ſovereign throne, receives ſupreme honours; that it is not at all aſtoniſhing, if human reaſon judge theſe objects in appearance contradictory. This ſyſtem ſeems alſo founded on virtue, even on the moſt noble and tranſcendent virtue, on zeal and fervency. It aims in appearance at ſupporting thoſe excellencies, of which God is moſt jealous, his divinity, his unity, his eſſence. It aims at preventing idolatry. Accordingly, they, who defend this ſyſtem, profeſs to follow the moſt illuſtrious ſcripture-models. They are the Phineaſſes, and Eleazars, who draw their ſwords only to maintain the glory of Jehovah. They are the Pauls, whoſe *ſpirits are ſtirred* by ſeeing the idolatry of Athens. They are the Elijahs, who are *moved with jealouſy, for the Lord of hoſts.*

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Iſai. ix. 6. Heb. i. 3.

Acts xvii. 16.

1 Kings xix. 10.

But, if the partiſans of error are ſo zealous and fervent, ſhould the miniſters of the truth languiſh in lukewarmneſs and indolence? If the divinity of the Son of God be attacked with weapons ſo formidable, ſhould not we oppoſe them with weapons more forcible, and more formidable ſtill? We alſo are *ſtirred* in our turn, we alſo in our turn are *moved with jealouſy* for the Lord of hoſts, and we conſecrate our miniſtry to day to the glory of that God-man, whoſe miniſters we are. In order to prove the doctrine of his divinity, we will not refer you to the philoſophers of the age, their knowledge is incapable of attaining the ſublimity of this myſtery; we will not even aſk you to hear your own teachers, the truth paſſing through their lips loſes ſometimes its force: They are the *elders*, they are the *angels*, they are *the thouſands, the ten thouſand times ten thouſands* before the throne of God, who render to Jeſus Chriſt ſupreme honours. We preach to you no other divinity than their divinity. We preſcribe to you

Dan. vii. 10.

SERM. V. Psalm ciii. 20, 21.

no other worſhip than their worſhip. No! no! celeſtial intelligences! *ye Angels! that excel in ſtrength; ye! who do the commandments of God; ye miniſters! that do his pleaſure;* we do not come to day to ſet up altar againſt altar, earth againſt heaven. The extreme diſtance, which your perfections put between you and us, which renders the purity of your worſhip ſo far ſuperior to ours, does not change the nature of our homage. We come to mix our incenſe with that, which you inceſſantly burn before our Jeſus, who is the object of your adoration and praiſe. Behold, Lord Jeſus! behold to day creatures proſtrating themſelves upon earth before thy throne, like thoſe, who are in heaven. Hear the harmonious concert, accept our united voices, *Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power and riches, wiſdom and ſtrength, honour and glory and bleſſing. Bleſſing and honour, glory and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* May every one of us *fall down, and worſhip him, that liveth for ever and ever.* Amen.

It is then in relation to the doctrine of our Saviour's divinity, and in relation to this doctrine only, that we are going to conſider the words of our text. They might indeed occaſion diſcuſſions of another kind. We might enquire firſt, who are the *twenty-four elders?* Perhaps the old teſtament miniſters are meant, in alluſion to the twenty four claſſes of prieſts, into which David divided them. We might farther aſk, who are the *four living creatures?* Perhaps they are emblems of the four evangeliſts. We might propoſe queſtions on the occaſion of this ſong, on the number, miniſtry and perfections of the intelligences mentioned in the text: but all our reflections on theſe articles would be uncertain, and unintereſting. As I ſaid before, we will confine ourſelves to one ſingle ſubject, and on three propoſitions we will ground the doctrine of the divinity of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

I. Jeſus

I. Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely adorable, and ſupremely adored by beings the moſt worthy of our imitation. SERM. V.

II. It implies a contradiction to ſuppoſe, that God communicates the honours of ſupreme adoration to a ſimple creature.

III. Our ideas on this article are perfectly conformable to the ideas of thoſe ages, the orthodoxy of which is beſt eſtabliſhed, and leaſt ſuſpected.

I. *Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely adorable, and ſupremely adored by beings the moſt worthy of our emulation*; this is our firſt propoſition. We join the term *ſupreme* to the term *adoration*, in order to avoid an equivocation, of which this propoſition is ſuſceptible. The ſcripture does not diſtinguiſh, as ſome divines with ſo little reaſon do, many ſorts of religious adorations. We do not find there the diſtinction of the worſhip of *Latria*, from the worſhip of *Dulia*: but *religious* adoration is diſtinguiſhed from *civil* adoration. Thus we are told in the nineteenth chapter of Geneſis, that Lot, ſeeing two angels, roſe up to meet them, and *bowed himſelf with his face toward the ground*, it is in the Hebrew, he *adored* them. We have numberleſs examples of the ſame kind. To remove this equivocation, to ſhew that we mean ſupreme adoration, we have affirmed, that Jeſus Chriſt is *ſupremely adorable*, and *ſupremely adored*. But wherein does this ſupreme adoration conſiſt? The underſtanding of this article, and in general of this whole diſcourſe, depends on a clear notion of ſupreme worſhip. We will make it as plain as we can. Supreme adoration ſuppoſes three diſpoſitions in him, who renders it, and it ſuppoſes accordingly three excellencies in him, to whom it is rendered. ver. 1.

1. Supreme adoration ſuppoſes an *eminence of perfections* in him, to whom it is rendered. It ſuppoſes alſo an *homage of mind relative to that eminence* in him, who renders it. Adoration is a diſpoſition of our minds, by which we acknowledge, that God excels all other beings, how great, how noble, how ſublime ſoever

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they may be. We acknowledge, that he has no ſuperior, no equal. We acknowledge him to be ſupremely wiſe, ſupremely powerful, ſupremely happy, in one word we acknowledge, that he poſſeſſeth all conceivable perfections without bounds, in the moſt elevated manner, and in excluſion to every other being. In this ſenſe it is ſaid, *Our God is one Lord; he only is wiſe; he only hath immortality.*

Deut. 6. 4. Jude 25. 1 Tim. vi. 15.

2. Supreme adoration ſuppoſes, that he, to whom it is rendered, is *ſupremely amiable*, ſupremely communicative, ſupremely good. Goodneſs is a perfection. It is compriſed in the idea, which we have already given of the adorable being: but we conſider it ſeparately; becauſe, in the foregoing article, we conſidered the divinity without any relation to our happineſs, whereas now we conſider him in his relation to our felicity; for it is the goodneſs of God, which relates God to us; it is that, which in ſome ſort reduces to our ſize, and moves towards us all thoſe other attributes, the immenſity of which abſorbs us, the glory of which confounds us. Adoration ſuppoſes in him, who renders it, an *adherence of heart*, by which he cleaves to God as to his ſupreme good. It is an effuſion of ſoul, which makes the worſhipper conſider him as the ſource of all the advantages, which he now enjoys, and of all the advantages, which he can ever enjoy. It makes him perceive, that he derives from him *life, motion and being*. It makes him ſay with a prophet, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. It is good for me to draw near to God. Bleſſed are all they, that put their truſt in him.*

Acts xvii. 28. Pſalm lxxiii. 25. 28. Pſal. ii. 12.

3. In fine, adoration ſuppoſes in him, to whom it is rendered, an *abſolute empire* over all beings that exiſt. It ſuppoſes in him, who renders it, that *perfect devotedneſs*, that unlimited ſubmiſſion, by which he acknowledges himſelf reſponſible to God for every inſtant of his duration; that there is no action ſo indifferent, no circumſtance ſo inconſiderable, no breath (ſo to ſpeak)

ſo

ſo ſubtil, which ought not to be conſecrated to him. SERM.
It is that univerſal homage, by which a man owns, that V.
God only has a right to preſcribe laws to him; that he only can regulate his courſe of life; and that all the honours, which are rendered to other beings, either to thoſe, who gave us birth, or to thoſe, who govern us in ſociety, ought to be in ſubordination to the honour, which is rendered to himſelf.

Such is our idea of ſupreme adoration, an idea not only proper to direct us in the doctrines of religion, as we ſhall ſee preſently, but ſingularly adapted to our inſtruction in the practice of it: an idea, which may ſerve to convince us whether we have attained the ſpirit of religion, or whether we are floating on the ſurface of it; whether we be idolaters, or true worſhippers of the living God; for theſe three diſpoſitions are ſo cloſely connected together, that their ſeparation is impoſſible. It is for this, that obedience to the commands of God is ſo powerfully enforced in religion as an eſſential part of the homage, which we owe him. It is for this, that the ſcriptures tell us, *covetouſneſs is idolatry*; *to obey is better than ſacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams*; *rebellion is as the ſin of witchcraft, and ſtubbornneſs is as iniquity and idolatry.* Col. iii. 5. 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.

Theſe truths being thus eſtabliſhed, we affirm, that Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely *adorable*, and we affirm alſo, that he is ſupremely *adored* by beings the moſt worthy of imitation. He is ſupremely adorable is a queſtion of right. He is ſupremely adored is a queſtion of fact.

1. The queſtion of *right* is decided by the idea, which the ſcripture gives us of Jeſus Chriſt. The three excellencies, which we muſt ſuppoſe in him, to whom adoration is paid, are attributed to him in ſcripture: and we are there required to render thoſe three homages to him, which ſuppoſe adoration in him, who renders them. The ſcripture attributes to him that *eminence of perfections*, which muſt needs claim the homage of our *minds*. What perfection can you conceive, which is not

aſcribed

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aſcribed to Jeſus Chriſt by the ſacred writers? Is it eternity? the ſcripture tells you, he *exiſted in the beginning*; *he was before Abraham*; he *is*, he *was*, he *is to come*. Is it omnipreſence? the ſcripture tells you, *where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is he in the midſt of them*; even when he aſcended into heaven, he promiſed to *be with* his Apoſtles on earth. Is it omnipotence? the ſcripture tells you, he is *the Almighty*. Is it omniſcience? the ſcripture tells you, *he knoweth all things*; he *needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man, for he knew what was in man*; he *ſearcheth the hearts and the reins*. Is it unchangeableneſs? the ſcripture tells you, he is *the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever*: even when *the heavens periſh, he ſhall endure*, when they ſhall *wax old*, when they ſhall *be changed*, when they ſhall be *changed like a veſture, he ſhall be the ſame, and his years ſhall have no end*. Hence it is, that ſcripture attributes to him a perfect equality with his Father; for he *counted it no robbery to be equal with God*. Hence it tells us, *in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*. For this reaſon, it calls him *God* by excellence: *his name ſhall be called, Wonderful, Counſellor, The mighty God, The everlaſting Father. O God! thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. We are in him that is true, even in Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life.* Hence he is called *the great God. God over all, bleſſed for evermore.*

John i. 1. viii. 58. Rev. i. 8. Matth. xviii. 20. xxviii. 20. Rev. i. 8. John xxi. 17. ii. 24. Rev. ii. 23. Heb. xiii. 8. Pſal. cii. 26, 27. Phil. ii. 6. Col. ii. 9. Iſai. ix. 6. Pſal. xlv. 8. Heb. i. 9. John i. 1, 2. 1 John v. 20. Tit. ii. 13. Rom. ix. 5.

2. The ſcripture attributes to Jeſus Chriſt that ſupreme *communication*, that ſupreme goodneſs, that intimate relation to our happineſs, which is the ſecond ground of adoration, and which is the foundation of that ſecond homage, which is required of a worſhipper, that is, the homage of the *heart*. Hence it is, that the holy ſcriptures direct us to conſider him, as the author of all the bleſſings, which we poſſeſs. If the heavens rolling above our heads ſerve us for a pavilion, if the earth

earth be firm beneath our feet to ſerve us for a ſupport, it is he, who is the author of both; for *thou Lord, thou haſt laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.* If numberleſs creatures near and remote contribute to the happineſs of man, it is he, who has formed them; for *without him nothing was made, that was made. By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.* If the Jews received miraculous deliverances in Egypt, if they gained immortal victories over the nations, which they defeated, it was he, who procured them, for *the angel of his preſence he ſaved them, in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old.* If darkneſs has been diſſipated from the face of the church, it was he who made it vaniſh; for *he is the true light, who lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* If we are reconciled to God, it was he who made our peace; for *we have redemption through his blood; it pleaſed the Father by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, and by the blood of his croſs* to unite *things in heaven, and things on earth.* If we have received the comforter, it was he who ſent him; for, ſays he, *I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.* If, after this life, our ſouls be carried into the boſom of God, it will be by his adorable hands; *Lord Jeſus,* ſaid one of his exemplary ſervants, *receive my ſpirit.* If our bodies riſe from their graves, if they be recalled to life, after they have been reduced to aſhes, he alone will re-animate them; for *he is the reſurrection and the life, he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live, and whoſoever liveth and believeth in him, ſhall never die.*

SERM. V.

Pſal. cii. 26.

John i. 3.

Col. i. 16, 17.

Iſai. lxiii. 9.

John i. 9.

Eph. i. 7.

Col. i. 19, 20.

John xvi. 7.

Acts vii. 59.

John xi. 25, 26.

3. Finally, the ſcripture attributes to Jeſus Chriſt the third ground of adoration, that is, *empire* over all creatures.

SERM. V. creatures. This lays a foundation for the third homage of the worſhipper, I mean devotedneſs of *life*. *I ſaw in the night viſions*, ſaid the prophet Daniel, *and behold! one, like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages ſhould ſerve him: his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that, which ſhall not be deſtroyed. The Lord hath ſaid unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, aſk of me and I ſhall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion; Thou ſhalt break them with a rod of iron, thou ſhalt daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel. Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O moſt mighty! with thy glory and with thy majeſty. Thine arrows are ſharp in the heart of the king's enemies, the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever: the ſcepter of thy kingdom is a right ſcepter. The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footſtool. The Lord ſhall ſend the rod of thy ſtrength out of Zion, rule thou in the midſt of thine enemies.* The queſtion of *right* then is ſufficiently proved.

Dan. vii. 13, &c.

Pſal. ii. 7.

Pſal. xlv. 3. 5, 6.

Pſal. cx. 1, 2.

The queſtion of *fact* immediately follows. As Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely adorable, ſo he is ſupremely *adored* by intelligences, whom we ought to imitate. This adoration is recommended by ſcripture; the very ſcripture, that forbids us to adore any but God, preſcribes the adoration of Jeſus Chriſt. *Let all the angels of God worſhip him. The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men ſhould honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He hath received a name above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow. The four and twenty elders fell down, and worſhipped him who liveth for ever and ever.* All the particular acts of adoration, which are reputed acts of idolatry when rendered to any but God, are rendered

Heb. i. 6.

John v. 22, 23.

Phil. ii. 9, 10.

to

to Jeſus Chriſt by the expreſs direction of the holy ſcriptures. Prayer, that prayer, of which it is ſaid, *how ſhall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?* prayer is addreſſed to Jeſus Chriſt; *they ſtoned Stephen praying and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit* (1). Confidence, that confidence, of which it is ſaid, *Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arm,* that confidence is an homage rendered to Jeſus Chriſt; *Whoſoever believeth on him ſhall not be aſhamed.* Baptiſm, that baptiſm, which is commanded to be adminiſtered in the name of the Father, that baptiſm is an homage rendered to Jeſus Chriſt, it is adminiſtered in his name; *Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son.* Swearing, that ſwearing, of which it is ſaid, *Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his name,* that ſwearing is an homage rendered to Jeſus Chriſt; *I ſay the truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the holy Ghoſt.* Benediction, that bleſſing, of which it is ſaid, *The Lord bleſs thee and keep thee,* that benediction is an homage rendered to Jeſus Chriſt. *Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* In fine, ſupreme praiſe, that praiſe, of which it is ſaid, *To the only wiſe God be honour and glory,* is an homage paid to Jeſus Chriſt. *And I beheld,* ſays our text, *and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders, ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power and riches, and wiſdom and ſtrength, to the Lamb be honour and glory and bleſſing for ever.* Weigh that expreſſion, which God uſes to give the greater weight to his command of worſhipping him only; *before my face,* (2) *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before my face.* God would have

SERM. V.

Rom. x. 14. Acts vii. 59. Jer. xvii. 5. Rom. x. 11. Matth. xxviii. 19. Deut. vi. 13. Rom. ix. 1. Num. vi. 24. Rom. i. 7. 1 Tim. i. 17. Exod. xx. 3.

(1) Ils lapidoient Etienne, *priant,* et diſant, Seigneur Jeſus, &c. perfectly agreeable to S. Luke's ΕΠΙΚΑΛΟΥΜΕΝΟΝ και λεγοντα. The word *God* in our text is inſerted properly.

(2) Mr. S. quotes according to the Hebrew text of Exod. xx. 3.

SERM. V. have this always inculcated among his ancient people, that he was among them in a peculiar manner, that he was their head and general, that he marched in the front of their camp, and conducted all their hoſt: he meant by this declaration, to retain them in his ſervice, and to make them comprehend how provoking it would be to him, ſhould they render divine honours in his preſence to any beſide himſelf. But here the elders, the angels, the ten thouſand, the ten thouſand times ten thouſands in heaven, in the *preſence* of God, and before the throne of his glory, adore Jeſus Chriſt, and pay no other honours to him, who *ſitteth on the throne*, than they pay to Jeſus Chriſt himſelf.

Collect now, my brethren, all theſe reflections into one point of view, and ſee into what contradictions people fall, who, admitting the divinity of our ſcriptures, refuſe to conſider Jeſus Chriſt as the ſupreme God. No, Jeſus Chriſt is not the ſupreme God, (thus are our opponents obliged to ſpeak.) Jeſus Chriſt is not the ſupreme God: but he poſſeſſeth that eminence of perfections, which conſtitutes the eſſence of the ſupreme God; like him he is eternal, like him he is omnipreſent, like him he is almighty, he knows all things like him, he ſearcheth the heart and the reins like him, he poſſeſſes the fulneſs of the Godhead like him, and like him merits the moſt profound homage of the *mind*. No, Jeſus Chriſt is not the ſupreme God: but he poſſeſſeth that goodneſs, that communication, which is the grand character of the ſupreme God; like God ſupreme, he made heaven and earth, he formed all creatures like him, he wrought miracles like a God, for the ancient church, he enlightens like him, he ſanctifies like him, he ſaves us, he raiſes us from the dead, he glorifies us like him, and like him merits the moſt profound homage of the *heart*. No, Jeſus Chriſt is not the ſupreme God: but we are commanded to worſhip him as if he were, St. Stephen prays to Jeſus Chriſt as if he were God, the faithful confide in Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt as if he were God, they ſwear by Jeſus Chriſt as if he were God, they bleſs in the name of Jeſus Chriſt as if he were God. Who does not perceive theſe contradictions? Our firſt propoſition is therefore ſufficiently eſtabliſhed. Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely adorable; Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely adored by intelligences the moſt worthy of imitation. But it implies a contradiction, to ſuppoſe that the honours of adoration ſhould be communicated to a ſimple creature. This is our ſecond propoſition, and the ſecond part of this diſcourſe. SERM. V.

II. This ſupreme adoration, of which we have given an idea, cannot be communicated to any being, except an eminence of perfections, ſuch as independence, eternity, omnipreſence, be communicated to that being alſo. Supreme adoration cannot be communicated to any being, except ſupreme goodneſs be communicated, except a being become an immediate eſſential ſource of felicity. Supreme adoration cannot be communicated to any being, unleſs abſolute, boundleſs, immenſe empire be communicated to him alſo. Now to communicate all theſe excellencies to a creature is to communicate the Godhead to him. If then it be abſurd to ſuppoſe that deity can be communicated to a creature, ſo that what had a beginning, becomes what had no beginning; it is alſo abſurd to ſuppoſe that a ſimple creature can poſſeſs theſe excellencies, and conſequently it implies a contradiction, to affirm that a created being can become ſupremely adorable. If therefore we have proved, that Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely adorable, we have thereby proved that he is the ſupreme God.

Accordingly, however important our ſecond propoſition may be, we ſhould ſuppoſe it fully proved, if the ſcripture did not ſeem poſitively to affirm, that a right to ſupreme adoration is a right acquired by Jeſus Chriſt, and is aſcribed to him, not on account of what he was from eternity, but of what he has done in time. *The Father judgeth no man*, ſays Jeſus Chriſt his ſelf: *but hath* John v. 22, 23.

SERM. V. *hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* Here, it is plain, Jeſus Chriſt does not require men to honour him, as they honour the Father, on account of his own excellent nature: but on account of that power to *judge the world*, which was given him in time. *He made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him.* Here again, Jeſus Chriſt ſeems to have received this exaltation only in virtue of that profound humiliation, and of that profound obedience, which he rendered to his Father. And in our text it ſeems as if thoſe acclamations, praiſes, and adorations, with which the happy ſpirits in heaven honour the Saviour of the world, are only offered to him on account of that ſacrifice, which he offered in time; for after theſe celeſtial intelligences have ſaid in the following words, *Thou art worthy to take the book and open the ſeals thereof, for thou waſt ſlain and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood*; they repeat this reaſon of adoration, and worſhip Jeſus Chriſt under the idea of a *Lamb*, ſaying, *Worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain, to receive power, riches, wiſdom*, and ſo on.

Phil. ii. 7-9.

This difficulty comes from the equivocal meaning of the term *worſhip*, which may be underſtood to regard thoſe infinite perfections, which eternally render him, who poſſeſſes them, worthy of ſupreme honours; or that particular honour, which God merits by the performance of ſome memorable work performed in time. The firſt ſort of adoration cannot be acquired. It is eſſential to him, to whom it is paid; this we have proved. But the ſecond kind of adoration, that part of ſupreme honour, which is rendered to God, in virtue of ſome new atchievement, that honour he acquires; and far from proving, that he who acquires this new honour, and the homage conſequential of it, does not poſſeſs eſſential Deity, it is on the contrary an invincible argument, that divinity is eſſential to him.

God,

God, for example, is eſſentially adorable, yet every new favour, that he grants, is an acquiſition of a new title of adoration. SERM. V.

Apply this remark to Jeſus Chriſt. As God he is eſſentially adorable. But Jeſus Chriſt, who is ſupremely adorable as God, may beſtow ſome new favour on us. In this ſenſe, he may acquire a new title of adoration, becauſe he affords us a new motive to adore him. And what more powerful motive can be propoſed, than that of his profound abaſement for our ſalvation? Now the inſpired writers in the paſſages, which we have cited, ſpeak of this latter kind of adoration. They do not ſay, Jeſus Chriſt hath acquired that divine eſſence, which renders him, who poſſeſſes it, eſſentially adorable; for that would imply a contradiction: they only ſay, that by the benefits, which he hath communicated to us in time, he hath acquired over us in time a new title of adoration. This is evident to a demonſtration in regard to the Philippian text, which appears the moſt difficult. For S. Paul, ſo far from affirming that Jeſus Chriſt had not thoſe perfections, which make any being adorable, till after his humiliation, eſtabliſhes expreſsly the contrary. He expreſsly ſays, that Jeſus Chriſt, before he was found *in faſhion as a man, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; that, before he took upon him *the form of a ſervant, he was in the form of God:* but when Jeſus Chriſt was *in the form of God*, when *he counted it no robbery to be equal with God*, he was ſupremely adorable. By conſequence, Jeſus Chriſt is not adorable only becauſe he was *found in faſhion as a man, and took upon him the form of a ſervant.* Phil. ii. 6, &c.

This ſhall ſuffice on the ſecond propoſition. Let us attend a few moments to the diſcuſſion of the third. Let us attend to the celebrated queſtion of the faith of the three firſt ages on the divinity of the Saviour of the world, and let us prove, that our ideas of the doctrine of Chriſt's divinity exactly anſwer thoſe of the ages, the orthodoxy of which is leaſt ſuſpected. This is our third part.

III. One

SERM. V. III. One of the moſt celebrated members of the Romiſh communion, a man (3) who would have been one of the ſureſt guides, who could have been choſen, to conduct us through the labyrinths of the firſt ages, could we have aſſured ourſelves, that the integrity of his heart had been equal to the clearneſs of his underſtanding, and to the ſtrength of his memory; this man, I ſay, has been the aſtoniſhment of every ſcholar, for declaring, that, after he had made profound reſearches into antiquity, it appeared to him, the doctrine of Chriſt's divinity was not generally received in the church, till after the Council of Nice. It is yet a problem, what could induce this able Jeſuit to maintain a paradox apparently ſo oppoſite to his own knowledge. But, leaving this queſtion to the deciſion of the ſearcher of hearts, let us only obſerve, that this author has been a thouſand times anſwered, both by our own divines, and by thoſe of the church of Rome. A treatiſe on this ſubject, by an illuſtrious prelate of the church of England, is in the hands of all learned men. The (4) author proves there with the fulleſt evidence, that the fathers, who lived before the Council of Nice, did maintain, firſt, that Jeſus Chriſt ſubſiſted before his birth; ſecondly, that he was of the ſame eſſence with his Father; and thirdly, that he ſubſiſted with him from all eternity. To repeat the paſſages, extracted from the fathers by this author, is not the work of a Sermon. We are going to take a way better proportioned to the limits of theſe exerciſes to arrive at the ſame end.

1. We will briefly indicate the principal precautions neceſſary to the underſtanding of the ſentiments of the fathers of the three firſt centuries on this article.

We will then more particularly inform you what their ſentiments were. And as theſe articles are a ſummary

(3) Petavius. (4) Bp. Bull.

ſummary of many volumes, and (if I may ſay ſo,) the eſſence of the labours of the greateſt men, they deſerve your ſerious attention. SERM. V.

1. In order to anſwer the objections, which may be extracted from the writings of the fathers againſt our theſis, the ſame general ſolution muſt be admitted, which we oppoſe to objections extracted from the ſcriptures. Paſſages of ſcripture are oppoſed to us, in which Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks of himſelf as a *ſimple man.* To this objection we reply, theſe paſſages make nothing againſt us. According to us, Jeſus Chriſt is God and man. We can no more conclude, that he is not God, becauſe the holy Spirit ſometimes ſpeaks of him as a ſimple man, than we can conclude, that he is not man, becauſe he ſpeaks of him ſometimes as God.

2. It muſt be obſerved, that, though the fathers taught, that Jeſus Chriſt was of the ſame eſſence with his Father, yet they believed, I know not what, *ſubordination* among the three perſons, who are the object of our worſhip. They conſidered the Father as the ſource of Deity, and pretended, that the generation of the Son gave the Father a pre-eminence above the Son, and that the proceſſion of the holy Ghoſt gave the Son a pre-eminence over the holy Ghoſt. "We are not Atheiſts, ſays Juſtin Martyr, we "religiouſly adore the Creator of this univerſe: we "put in the ſecond place Jeſus Chriſt, who is the true "Son of God, and we place in the third degree the "ſpirit of prophecy." (5) As theſe firſt teachers of the church have ſometimes been contradicted on this article, ſo they have advanced in the heat of the diſpute ſome over-ſtrained propoſitions, which we cannot adopt; as this of Origen, among many others. "There have been among the multitude of the faith-"ful ſome, who, departing from the ſentiments receiv-"ed by others, have raſhly affirmed, that Jeſus Chriſt "was

(5) Apol. ſec. ad Ant. Pium. pag. 60. edit. Paris.

SERM. V. John xiv. 28.

" was God over all creatures. In truth, we who believe " the word of the Son, who ſaid, *The Father is greater* " *than I*, do not believe this propoſition."(6) The advantages, which the Arians gained by this, made many of the fathers after the Nicene council renounce the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt, and explain thoſe paſſages, in which Chriſt acknowledged himſelf inferior to the Father, of his humanity. This is the method of S. Athanaſius, (7) of S. Cyril of Alexandria, (8) and of many others. It was particularly S. Auguſtine's way, who, to prove that theſe expreſſions ought to be underſtood of the humanity only of Jeſus Chriſt, makes this remark, that they are never uſed of the holy Ghoſt, that it is no where ſaid of the holy Ghoſt, that the Father is *greater than he* (9).

3. The fathers, who lived before the council of Nice, admitted a *generation* of the Son of God, before the foundation of the world, and which is no other than that power, which proceeded from the Father, when he created the univerſe. We muſt take care not to be deceived by arguments taken from ſuch paſſages. It cannot be concluded, that theſe fathers denied the exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt before the foundation of the world, becauſe they ſaid, he then came from the boſom of the Father. Here is an example of their way of expreſſing this generation. " I am going, ſays Tatian, " to *explain clearly* the myſteries of our religion. In the " beginning was God. Now we have learnt, that this " beginning is the power of the word; for the Lord " of all things was then all the ſubſtance of the uni- " verſe, becauſe, having then made no creature, he " exiſted alone. By his ſimple will his word proceeded " from him. Now the word did not advance into the " empty void: but was the firſt work of the ſpirit, " and

(6) Origen againſt Celſus, book 8th.
(7) Athan. Dialog. cont. Maced.
(8) Cyril Alex. de vera fide. c. 26.
(9) Auguſt, Ep. 66. et lib. 2. de Trin. c. 6.

" and, we know, this is the principle of the world." (1) This father calls this *clearly explaining* the myſteries of our religion. Perhaps he might find ſome gainſayers. However, it appears by this paſſage, and by a great number more, that the ancient doctors of the church thought, Jeſus Chriſt was then produced after a certain manner, which they explained according to their own ideas. We do not deny their holding this opinion. We only ſay, that what they advanced concerning this production in time does not prove, that they did not admit the eternal generation of Jeſus Chriſt. SERM. V.

4. We do not pretend, that certain *expreſſions*, which the orthodox have affected ſince the council of Nice, were received in the *ſame ſenſe* before that council. We generally ſee, when two parties warmly controvert a point, they affect certain expreſſions, and uſe them as their livery. As we can never find terms proper to expreſs this union, or this ineffable diſtinction between Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt, ſo we muſt not be ſurprized, that the church hath varied on this article. " Neceſſity," ſays S. Auſtin, ſpeaking of the terms uſed in diſputing with the Arians, " neceſſity has given " birth to theſe terms, in order to avoid the ſnares of " heretics in long diſcuſſions."(2) We acknowledge then, ſome of the fathers have advanced that the Father and the Son had two diſtinct *eſſences*, or two different *natures*. Thus, according to Photius, Pierius, prieſt and martyr, (3) and Dennis of Rome, in a letter againſt the Sabellians, (4) declaimed againſt thoſe, who divided the divinity into three *Hypoſtaſes*, or three *Perſons*. And thus alſo the orthodox, aſſembled in council at Sardis, complained, that the heretical faction wanted to eſtabliſh, that Father, Son, and holy Ghoſt were

(1) Tatian. orat. con. Græc. See Theoph. Anti. lib. 2. ad Autol. Tertull. adv. Prax. p. 505. edit. Rigalt.

(2) Auguſt. lib. 7. de trin. cap. 4.

(3) Phot. Bib. Cod. i. 9.

(4) Athan. de Syn. Nic. decr.

SERM. V. were three diſtinct *perſons:* "for," add theſe fathers, "our anceſtors have taught us, and it is the catholic and apoſtolic tradition, that there is but one *perſon* in the divinity." (5) The queſtion is not, whether the fathers of the firſt ages uſed the very terms, which ſucceeding ages have uſed. We do not ſay they did. "We would not excite odious diſputes about words "provided other ſyllables include the ſame opinion:" (6) but the queſtion is, whether they had the ſame ideas, whether, when they ſaid there were three *eſſences* in the deity and one *perſon*, they did not mean by *eſſence* what we mean by *perſon*, and by *perſon* what we mean by *eſſence*.

5. We muſt take care not to lay down for a principle, that the fathers *expreſſed themſelves juſtly*, that their words were always the moſt proper to convey adequate ideas of their ſentiments, that they always reaſoned in a cloſe uniform manner, that their theſes in ſome pages of their writings never contradict their theſes in other pages. The ſenſe of a paſſage in Origen, or Tertullian, divides the learned. Some affirm, theſe fathers meant one thing, others ſay, they meant another thing. Each pretends to define preciſely what they intended. Is there not ſometimes a third part to take? May we not believe, that Origen and Tertullian, in other reſpects great men, had not diſtinct ideas of what they meant to expreſs, and did not always rightly underſtand themſelves.

6. In fine, the laſt precaution, which we muſt uſe to underſtand the ſentiments of the firſt eccleſiaſtical writers, and which demands a very particular attention, is not to be deceived by *ſpurious writings*. We know what was the almoſt general weakneſs of chriſtians of thoſe times. We know, particularly, what were the ſecret dealings of the Arians. We know, they often ſubſtituted power for reaſon, and craft for power, when

(5) Theod. Hiſt. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 8.

(6) Greg. Nazianz.

when authority was wanting. Among ſpurious writ- SERM. V.
ings, thoſe, which have the moſt certain marks of reprobation, are frequently thoſe, which have the moſt venerable titles. Such, among others, is that, which bears the fine name of *Apoſtolical conſtitutions.* It is very ſurpriſing, that a man, who cannot be juſtly taxed with ignorance of the writings of the ancient fathers, ſhould advance this unwarrantable propoſition, This book is of apoſtolical authority. (7) The doctor threatens the church with a great volume to eſtabliſh his opinion, and to forward in the end the dreadful deſign, which he has formed, and declared, of reviving Arianiſm. Time will convince the learned, on what unheard of reaſons this man grounds his pretenſions. Who can perſuade himſelf, that a book, the ſpuriouſneſs of which has been acknowledged, even by thoſe, who had the greateſt intereſt in defending its authenticity, by Bellarmine, (8) Baronius, (9) Petavius, (1) Du Perron (2) and many others; a book, which none of the fathers, none of the councils, even thoſe, which have given us liſts of the canonical books, have ever comprized in the canon; (3) a book, of which there is no trace in the three firſt centuries, nor hardly any in thoſe, which immediately follow; a book, full of paſſages of ſcripture miſ-quoted; (4) a book, which makes deciſions contrary to the inſpired writings; (5) as one deciſion touching the obſervation of the ſabbath, another concerning women with child, a third, which allows a maſter a forbidden intercourſe with his ſlave; a book, that

(7) Doctor Whiſton.
(8) Bellarm. de ſcript. eccl. ſect. 1.
(9) Barón. tom. 1. an. 32.
(1) Du Per. de Euch. l. 2. c. 1.
(2. 3) Conc. Laod. 3d counc. of Carthage.
(4) Book 1. chap. 5. Amſt. edit. Frob. pages 221. 214. 402. 293. &c.
(5) Book 2. chap. 36.
References to all the other articles are in Mr. S. but omitted for brevity-ſake here.

SERM. V. that beſtows pompous titles on a biſhop, giving him a pre-eminence above magiſtrates, princes, and kings; a book, that preſcribes idle ceremonies in baptiſm, and enjoins the obſervation of ſuperſtitious faſts and feſtivals; a book, which gives an abſurd idea of building temples; a book, that eſtabliſheth prayer for the dead, and directs us to offer the ſacrament of the Euchariſt for them; a book, which adopts notorious fables, as the pretended combat between Simon the ſorcerer, and Simon Peter; a book, where we meet with glaring contradictions, as what it ſays of St. Stephen in one place, compared with what it ſays of him in another; a book, where we meet with profane things, as the compariſon of a biſhop with God the Father, of Jeſus Chriſt with a deacon, of the holy Ghoſt with a deaconeſs; who, I ſay, can perſuade himſelf, that ſuch a book was compiled by apoſtles or apoſtolic men.

Such are the precautions neceſſary for underſtanding the ſentiments of the fathers of the firſt ages on the doctrine in queſtion. Let us paſs on to ſome proofs of our conformity to their judgments on this article.

1. The fathers, who followed the doctrine of the Nicene council, never pretended to teach new divinity. The Arians, on the contrary, boaſted of being the firſt inventors of their own ſyſtem. The following paſſage of S. Athanaſius proves the firſt member of this propoſition. "We demonſtrate, that our doctrine deſcend-" ed from teacher to teacher down to us. But what " father can you cite to prove your ſentiments? You " find them all oppoſite to your opinions, and the " Devil only, who is the author of your ſyſtem, can " pretend to authenticate it."(6) The following paſſage of Theodoret proves the ſecond member of the propoſition. " They boaſt of being the firſt inventors of " their doctrine, they glory in affirming, that what " never

(6) Athan. lib. 1. de Syn. Nic. dec.

" never entered into the mind of man before has been " revealed to them."(7) SERM. V.

2. The Jews accuſed the primitive chriſtians of idolatry for worſhipping Jeſus Chriſt as God, nor did the primitive chriſtians deny their worſhipping Jeſus as God; they only maintained, that to worſhip him as ſuch was not idolatry. Here is a paſſage from Juſtin's dialogue with Trypho. The Jew ſays to him, " Your " affirmation, Chriſt is God, appears to me not only " an incredible paradox, but downright fooliſhneſs." Juſtin's anſwer will prove the ſecond member of the propoſition. " I know," replies he, " this diſcourſe " appears incredible, particularly to people of your " nation, who neither believe nor underſtand the " things of the ſpirit of God."

3. The heathens alſo reproached the chriſtians with adoring Jeſus Chriſt: nor did the chriſtians tax them with calumny on this account. Weigh theſe words of Arnobius. A pagan makes this objection to him; " You adore a mere man." If this were true," replies Arnobius, " would not the benefits, which he has ſo " freely and bountifully diffuſed, acquire him the " title of a God? But as he is really God without any " ambiguity or equivocation, do you think, we will deny " our paying him ſupreme honours? What then, will " ſome furiouſly aſk, Is Jeſus Chriſt God? Yes, we " anſwer, he is God, he is God over all heavenly " powers." (8) Origen anſwered the philoſopher Celſus, who reproached him with believing that a man clothed in mortal fleſh was God, in this manner. Let our accuſers know, that this Jeſus, who, we believe, is God, and Son of God, is the word of God, his mortal body and his ſoul have received great advantages from their union with the word, and, having partaken of the divinity, have been admitted to the divine nature. (9)

4. When

(7) Theod. Hiſt. Ec. lib. 1. cap. 4. See Soc. Hiſt. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 10.

(8) Arnob. lib. 1.

(9) Orig. contra Celſum, lib. 3.

SERM. V. 4. When any teachers roſe up in the church to injure the doctrine of Chriſt's divinity, they were reputed heretics, and as ſuch rejected. Witneſs Artemon, Theodoſius, Paul of Samoſeta. The latter lifted up a ſtandard againſt the divinity of the ſaviour of the world, and ſix of the moſt celebrated biſhops were choſen by the ſynod of Antioch to write him a letter, which we yet have, and in which they profeſs to believe, that Jeſus Chriſt ſubſiſted from all eternity with his father. (1) To which we add this paſſage of Origen, "Let us re-"preſent as fully as we are able what conſtitutes he-"reſy. He is a heretic, who has falſe notions about "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Such as deny, that he was "the firſt-born, the God of every creature, the word, "the wiſdom, the beginning of the ways of God, *formed* Prov. viii. "*from the beginning, or ever the world was, begotten be-*"*fore the mountains and hills.*" (2)

5. The fathers of the three firſt centuries made an invariable profeſſion of adoring but one God. This was, as it were, the firſt diſtinct character of their religion. Yet the primitive Chriſtians adored Jeſus Chriſt: witneſs Pliny's letter, which ſays, "they ſang "hymns to Jeſus Chriſt as to a God." (3) Witneſs Juſtin Martyr, who, in his Apology to Antoninus expreſsly ſays, "Chriſtians religiouſly worſhip Father, "Son, and Spirit." And in the ſame apology he aſſures us, that "the conſtant doctrine of Chriſtians, "which they received from Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, was "the adoration of one only God." Witneſs that famous letter of the faithful at Smyrna, whom the heathens accuſed of paying divine honours to Polycarp. "It is impoſſible," ſay theſe believers, "that we ſhould "abandon Jeſus Chriſt, or worſhip any other but him. "We

(1) Euſeb. Eccl. hiſt. lib. 5. Athan. de Syn. Arim. et Seleuc. Bibliot. des peres. tom. 2.

(2) Apol. Pamph. Mart. in the 4th vol. of S. Jerom's works. Edit. Froben.

(3) Lib. 10. Epiſt. 97.

" We worſhip Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Son of God: SERM.
" but in regard to the martyrs, diſciples of Chriſt, V.
" and imitators of his virtues, we reſpect them for their
" invincible love to their Maſter and King." Hence it was, that Paul of Samoſeta, who denied the divinity of Chriſt, would not allow the cuſtom of ſinging hymns to his honour: and Euſebius uſes this argument to prove the doctrine that we are maintaining: " The pſalms and hymns," ſays he, " compoſed a long
" time ago by the faithful, do they not proclaim,
" that Jeſus Chriſt is the word of God, that he is
" God."(4)

6. Finally, among numberleſs paſſages in the fathers, which atteſt the truth in queſtion, there are ſome ſo clear and ſo expreſs, that we ourſelves, who would prove their faith in our Saviour's divinity, cannot dictate terms more emphatical than thoſe, which they have uſed. Weigh theſe words of Tertullian. " Jeſus
" Chriſt had the ſubſtance of the human nature, and the
" ſubſtance of the divine nature; on which account, we
" ſay, he had a beginning, and he had no beginning;
" he was natural and ſpiritual; weak and powerful;
" mortal and immortal; properties (adds this father)
" which diſtinguiſh his human and divine nature."(5) Weigh theſe words of the ſame Tertullian. " We have
" been taught that God brought forth that ſpirit,
" which we call the Word, that God by bringing him
" forth begat him, that for this reaſon he is called the
" Son of God, becauſe his ſubſtance and the ſubſtance of
" God is one and the ſame ſubſtance; as a ray proceeding
" from the body of the ſun, receives a part of its light
" without diminiſhing the light of the ſun, ſo, in the
" generation of the word, ſpirit is derived of ſpirit, and
" God of God. As the light of a flambeau derived
" from another does not at all diminiſh the light whence

(4) Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. book 7. chap. 30. book 5. ch. 28.
(5) Tertul. de Carne Chriſti.

SERM. V. "whence it is taken, ſo it is with God. That, which "proceeds from him, is God, both God and Son of "God, one with the Father, and the Father with him. "It follows, that this diſtinction of ſpirit from ſpirit, "of God from God, is not in ſubſtance but in perſon." (6) Weigh again theſe words of Hyppolitus the martyr. "Thou art he, who exiſteſt always. Thou "art with the Father without beginning, and eternal as "well as the holy Spirit." (7) Again, weigh theſe words of Origen. In examining what doctrines are neceſſary to ſalvation, he puts this in the firſt claſs: "Jeſus "Chriſt, who, being God, became incarnate, did not "ceaſe to be God." (8) Again, weigh theſe of Juſtin Martyr. "They call us Atheiſts, becauſe we do not "adore their demons. We grant we are ſuch in re"gard to their gods: but not in regard to the true "God, with whom we honour and worſhip the "Son." (9) Finally, weigh theſe of Pope Felix. "We "believe, Jeſus Chriſt the word is the eternal ſon of "God." (1)

No part of our diſcourſe would bear a greater enlargement than this. Literally ſpeaking, the ſubject exemplified from the fathers would fill a large volume. We have abridged the matter. Let us finiſh with a few reflections of another kind on our text.

We have endeavoured to prove, that Jeſus Chriſt is ſupremely adorable, and ſupremely adored. Chriſtians, what idea do you form of this doctrine? Do we think, we have done all, that this doctrine engages us to do, when we have ſignalized our zeal by affirming and defending it? Shall we be of that number of extravagant people, who, having eſtabliſhed the truth with warmth, ſometimes with wrath (placing their paſſion to the

(6) Tertul. adv. Gen. Apol. cap. 21.
(7) Bibl. Patr. tom. 12.
(8) Origen cont. Celſ. lib. 5.
(9) Juſt. Mart. Apol. 2.
(1) Conc. Epheſ. act. 1.

the account of religion) imagine, they have thereby acquired a right of refuſing to Jeſus Chriſt that unlimited obedience, which ſo directly follows the doctrine of his divinity? The ſacred authors, whom we have followed in proving this doctrine, draw very different conſequences from it. They uſe it to inflame our love for a God, who *ſo loved the world as to give his only begotten ſon.* They uſe it to elevate us to the ſublimeſt hopes, declaring it impoſſible for him, *who gave his own ſon, not to give us all things freely with him.* They uſe it to enforce every virtue, particularly humility, a virtue eſſential to a Chriſtian; and, when order requires it, to ſacrifice the titles of Noble, Sovereign, Potentate, Monarch, after the example of this God-man, who, *being in the form of God, and counting it no robbery to be equal with God, humbled himſelf.* They uſe it to exalt the Evangelic diſpenſation above the Moſaic œconomy, and by the ſuperiority of the former to prove, that piety ſhould be carried to a more eminent degree now than formerly; for God, *who ſpake to the fathers by the prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken to us by his ſon.* They uſe it to prove, that the condition of a wicked Chriſtian would be infinitely worſe after this life than that of a wicked Jew; for *if the word ſpoken by angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recompence of reward, how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great a ſalvation, which at firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord? He that deſpiſed Moſes's law died without mercy under two or three witneſſes. Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be counted worthy, who hath trodden under foot the ſon of God?* They uſe it to deſcribe the deſpair of thoſe, who ſhall ſee him come in divine pomp, whom they once deſpiſed under the vail of mortal fleſh, for *they that pierced him ſhall ſee him, and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, ſhall hide themſelves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and ſhall ſay to the mountains*

SERM. V.

John iii. 16.

Rom. iii. 31.

Phil. ii. 6.

Heb. i. 1.

ii. 2.

x. 28. 29.

Rev. i. 7. vi. 15, &c.

SERM. V. *and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that ſitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand?*

2. Our ſecond reflection is on that multitude of intelligences, which continually wait around the throne of God. Hear what Daniel ſays, *Thouſand thouſands miniſtered unto him, ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him.* Hear what Micaiah ſays, *I ſaw the Lord ſitting on his throne, and all the hoſt of heaven ſtanding by him, on his right hand and on his left.* Hear what the Pſalmiſt ſays, *The chariots of God are twenty thouſand, even thouſands of angels.* Hear what S. Luke ſays, *There was a multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing God and ſaying, Glory to God in the higheſt.* Hear what Jeſus Chriſt ſays, *Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve legions of angels?* Hear what our text ſays, *The number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands.* My brethren, one of the moſt dangerous temptations, to which a believer is expoſed in this world, is that of ſeeing himſelf deſpiſed. He ſometimes, like Elias, thinks himſelf *alone* on the Lord's ſide. Like Joſhua, he is ſometimes obliged to ſay of his duty, *Chooſe you whom you will ſerve: but as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* The church is yet a *little flock*, and although we cannot ſay of the external profeſſion of religion as S. Paul ſays, *Ye ſee your calling, brethren, that not many mighty, not many wiſe, not many noble are called*, yet it may be too truly ſaid of the reality and eſſence of chriſtianity. No, we have *not many noble*. They are called noble in the world, who have, or who pretend to have, ſome ancient titles, and who are often aſhamed of thoſe, whom Jeſus Chriſt has ennobled, aſſociated into his family, made *partakers of the divine nature*, and *changed from glory to glory by his ſpirit*. We have very few of theſe nobles. No, we have *not many mighty*. They are called mighty in the world, who have the art of ſurmounting

Dan. vii. 10.
1 Kings xxii. 19.
Pſal. lxviii. 17.
Luke ii. 13.
Matth. xxvi. 53.
2 Kings xix. 10.
Joſh. xxiv. 15.
Luke xii. 32.
1 Cor. i. 26.
2 Pet. i. 4.
2 Cor. iii. 18.

mounting every obſtacle in the path that leads to for- SERM. V.
tune, who, in ſpite of a world of oppoſers, have the art of arriving at the pinacle of worldly grandeur, and make the difficulties oppoſed to their deſigns the means of ſucceeding. Theſe people generally entertain a contemptible idea of ſuch as are concentred in virtue, who uſe it both as buckler and ſword to conquer fleſh and blood, *the prince of the power of the air*, and his formi- Eph. ii. 2.
dable legions. We have but few of ſuch mighty ones as theſe. No, *we have not many wiſe.* They are called wiſe in this world, who by the impenetrable ſecrets of a profound policy find new ways of ſupporting the ſtate, and of deriving from public proſperity a fund to maintain their own pomp. Thoſe are uſually deſpiſed, who poſſeſs that fear of the Lord, which *is the beginning* Prov. i. 7.
of wiſdom, of that *wiſdom among them, that are perfect*, 1 Cor. ii. 6.
which we are taught in the goſpel. We have very few of theſe wiſe men. What then! have falſhood and vice more partiſans than virtue and truth? What then! ſhall we have leſs approbation in ſubmitting to God than in ſubmitting to the devil? Far from us be an idea ſo puerile! Let us ceaſe to conſider this little handful of men, who ſurround us, as if they made up the univerſality of intelligences; and this earth, this point, this atom, as if it were the immenſity of ſpace. Let us open our eyes. Let our text produce the ſame effect in us to day as Eliſha's voice once produced in his ſervant. All on a ſudden they were ſurrounded with ſoldiers, armies, and chariots, ſent by the Syrian king to carry off Eliſha. The ſervant is frighted; *Alas my maſter!* ſays he, *what* 1 Kings vi.
ſhall we do? Fear not, anſwers Eliſha, *they, that be with* 15, &c.
us, are more than they, that be with them. And Eliſha prayed, and ſaid, Lord I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may ſee. And what does he ſee? *He ſees the mountain full of horſes and chariots of fire round about Eliſha.* Believers, ye, who think yourſelves alone on the Lord's ſide, ye, who tremble at the ſight of the formidable troops, which the enemy of your ſalvation has ſent againſt you, ye,

SERM. V. who cry, *What ſhall we do? Fear not, they, that are with us, are more than they, that are with them. . . . . O Lord, open their eyes that they may ſee.* See chriſtians! ſee whether ye be alone. See theſe *ten thouſand times ten thouſands, that ſtand before him.* See theſe *heavenly hoſts*, which ſurround his throne *on the right hand and on the left.* See the *twenty thouſand chariots.* See legions of angels and elders, *whoſe numbers are twenty thouſand times ten thouſand.** Theſe are your companions, theſe your approvers, theſe your defenders.

Rev. ix. 16.

3. But what are the delights of theſe intelligences? Ye have heard my brethren, (and this is our third reflection.) their felicity, their delights conſiſt in rendering ſupreme honours to God. *And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels, round about the throne, ſaying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain, to receive power and riches, and wiſdom and ſtrength.* A reflection very proper to humble and confound us, whoſe taſte is ſo vitiated and depraved. I am aware, that nothing is leſs ſubject to our deciſions than taſte. I am aware, that what is delicious to one is diſguſtful to another, and, as it would be ſtupid to expect a ſublime ſpirit ſhould take pleaſure in the groſs occupations of a mechanic, ſo it would be unjuſt to expect that a mechanic ſhould be pleaſed with the noble ſpeculations of a ſublime genius. I know, the difference between us and theſe intelligences is ſuch as not to allow our pleaſures to be of the ſame kind. But, after all, is this difference ſo great as to make ſuch a diſproportion in our delights? Do we not aſpire to divine happineſs as well as they? And if the fleſh, which covers that ſpiritual ſubſtance, which animates us, placeth us ſo far beneath them, is not the honour, which this fleſh has received by the incarnation of the Word, who *took not on him the nature of angels but the ſeed of Abraham,*

Heb. ii. 16.

is

* Rev. ix. 16. Two hundred thouſand thouſand. *Vingt mille fois dix mille.* Duæ myriades myriadum. *Indefinite* intelligendum, more Hebræo, pro ingenti numero.

is not this more than enough to remove the prodigious diſtance, which the ſublimity of their eſſence puts between us and them? at leaſt ſhould it not make us lament the depravity of our taſte, if it be not ſufficient perfectly to reſtore it? Chriſtians, the plan of our evangelic felicity is founded on that of celeſtial felicity. Chriſtians are called, even here below, to taſte thoſe noble pleaſures, which are ſo delightful to the bleſſed above. Let us feel theſe pleaſures, my brethren. Let us feel the pleaſure of rendering to God the homage of the mind. Let us ſoar into a ſublime meditation of his eſſence. Of his perfections let us form the moſt elevated ideas, that our diminutive capacities can permit. Let us conceive, as far as we poſſibly can, a wiſe God, ſupremely powerful, ſupremely holy, ſupremely good. Let us aſſociate his glorious attributes, and, judging by the ſplendor of theſe feeble rays, of ſome of the beauties of the original, let us adore this Great Supreme. Let us feel the pleaſure of rendering to God the homage of the heart. Let us meaſure the dimenſions of love divine. Let us loſe ourſelves in the *length*, in the *breadth*, in the *height*, in the *depth* of *that love*, *which paſſeth knowledge*. Let us conceive the inexpreſſible felicity of an intimate union with the *happy* God. Let us reflect on the happineſs of a creature, who has a relation of love to a God, who knows how to love with ſo much extent, with ſo much pity, with ſo much power. Let us feel the pleaſure of rendering to God the homage of an entire devotedneſs, the ſubmiſſion of all our deſires. Slaves of the world, let us free ourſelves from ſenſuality and cupidity, let us ſhake off the yoke of theſe domineering paſſions, let us *ſubmit ourſelves to God*. Thus let us taſte the felicity of returning to order, of obeying that God, all whoſe commands enforce love to what is ſupremely lovely.

SERM. V.

Eph. iii. 18.

1 Tim. vi. 15.

James iv. 7.

True, deceitful world! thou wilt yet oppoſe our real pleaſures. True, ſenſual fleſh! thou wilt yet ſolicit us to pleaſures agreeable to thy corruption. True, worldly

SERM. V. worldly pomp! thou wilt again dazzle us with thy vain glory. But thou worldly pomp ſhalt preſently vaniſh! thou ſenſual fleſh ſhalt preſently fall into the duſt! thou
1 Cor. vii. 31. alſo deceitful *faſhion of the world* ‖ thou ſhalt preſently paſs away! preſently theſe auditors, who have endeavoured to approach neareſt to angelic pleaſures, ſhall approach them entirely. Shortly this flock ſhall be numbered with the *twenty thouſand times ten thouſand.* Preſently the voices, which have made theſe walls reſound the Creator's praiſe, ſhall ſing it in a nobler manner, and ſhall make the heavenly arches eccho the hymn in my text, *Worthy is the Lamb to receive honour, power, riches, wiſdom, ſtrength, glory, and bleſſing. To him, that ſitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, be bleſſing, and honour, and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

‖ 1 Cor. vii. 31. Faſhion of this world. το σχημα τυ κοσμυ τυτυ, Locutio a theatro et ſcenis deſumpta, quæ ſubito cum perſonis mutantur. *Figure du monde trompeur.*

SERMON

SERMON VI.

CHRIST the SUBSTANCE of the ANCIENT SACRIFICES of the LAW.

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HEBREWS x. 5, 6, 7.

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not: but a body haſt thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings, and ſacrifices *for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure: Then ſaid I, Lo! I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me.) to do thy will, O God.*

TO take Jeſus Chriſt for our redeemer and for our example is an abridgement of religion, and the only way to heaven.

If Jeſus Chriſt be not taken for our redeemer, alas! how can we bear the looks of a God, *who is of purer eyes than to behold evil?* How can we hope to pleaſe, with prayers debaſed by numberleſs imperfections; with a repentance, in which a regret for not daring to repeat a crime, too often mixes with a ſorrow for having committed it; with a love, of which ſelf-intereſt is always the firſt ſpring; how, I ſay, can we hope with our ſinful ſervices to pleaſe a God, before whom ſeraphims vail their faces, and in whoſe ſight the heavens themſelves are unclean? Hab. i. 13.

If we do not take Jeſus Chriſt for our example, with what face can we take him for our redeemer? Should we make the myſteries of religion myſteries of iniquity? Should we wiſh, that he, who came into the world on

SERM. VI. purpoſe to deſtroy the works of the devil, would re-eſtabliſh them, in order to fill up by communion with this wicked ſpirit that void, which communion with Chriſt leaves? But to take Jeſus Chriſt for a redeemer and to take him for a model, is to unite all, that can procure our ſupreme felicity; it is, as I ſaid before, an abridgement of religion, and the only way to heaven.

In theſe two points of light S. Paul preſents our divine Saviour to the view of the Hebrews, in this chapter, from which we have taken the text, and in ſome following chapters. It was neceſſary to convince men, educated in Judaiſm, new converts to chriſtianity, and greatly prejudiced in favour of the magnificence of the levitical ſervice, that the moſt pompous parts of the Moſaic ritual, the altars and the offerings, the prieſts and the ſacrifices, the temple and all its ceremonies, were deſigned to prefigure the ſacrifice on the croſs. It was neceſſary to convince men, who were as little acquainted with the morality of the goſpel as with the divinity of it, that, far from uſing this oblation to diminiſh in the leaſt degree the motives, which engage every intelligent creature to devote himſelf to his Creator, it was employed to give them all new and additional influence. S. Paul intended to convince the Jewiſh converts of theſe truths in this epiſtle in general, and in my text in particular. But is the doctrine of my text addreſſed to new converts only? Suppoſe the doctrine addreſſed particularly to them, does it follow, that it is needleſs to preach it in this pulpit? We will not examine theſe queſtions now. However averſe we are to conſume the precious moments of theſe exerciſes in ſcholaſtic debates, the words, that we have read, furniſh us with a moſt ſpecious pretext for a minute diſcuſſion of them. Are the words of my text to be conſidered as the language of Jeſus Chriſt, as the far greater number of expoſitors, for very ſtrong reaſons, maintain? Are they the words of David, who, conſidering the many reaſons, which perſuade us to believe, that the dedica-

tions

tions of our perſons to the ſervice of God are the moſt acceptable of all ſacrifices to him, vows to devote himſelf to his ſervice? We anſwer, They are the words of Jeſus Chriſt; they are the words of David; and they expreſs the ſentiments of all true believers after him. We are going to prove theſe aſſertions. SERM. VI.

Firſt, We will conſider the text, as proceeding from the mouth of Jeſus Chriſt. We will ſhew you Jeſus ſubſtituting the ſacrifice of his body inſtead of thoſe of the Jewiſh œconomy.

Secondly, We will put the words of the text into your mouths, and we will endeavour to convince you, that this ſecond ſenſe of the text is clearly deducible from the firſt, and neceſſarily connected with it. Having excited your admiration, in the firſt part of this diſcourſe, at that ineſtimable gift of God, his beloved Son, we will endeavour, in the ſecond, to excite ſuitable ſentiments of gratitude in each of your hearts.

Great God! What bounds can I henceforth ſet to my gratitude? Can I be ſo ſtupid as to imagine, that I expreſs a ſufficient ſenſe of thy beneficence by ſinging a pſalm, and by performing a lifeleſs ceremony? I feel irregular propenſities. Great God! to thee I ſacrifice them all. My body rebels againſt thy laws. To thee I offer it in ſacrifice. My heart is ſuſceptible of fervour and flame. For thee, my God! may it for ever burn! *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not: but a body haſt thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings, and ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure: then ſaid I, Lo! I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God!* Accept this dedication of ourſelves to thee, O God! Amen.

I. Let us conſider our text in relation to Jeſus Chriſt, the Meſſiah. Three things are neceſſary. 1. Our text is a quotation; it muſt be verified. 2. It is a difficult paſſage; it muſt be explained. 3. It is one of the moſt eſſential truths of religion; it muſt be ſupported by ſolid proofs.

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1. Our text is *a quotation, and it muſt be verified.* It is taken from the fortieth pſalm. S. Paul makes a little alteration in it, for which we will aſſign a reaſon in a following article. In this, our buſineſs is to prove, that the pſalm is prophetical, and that the prophet had the Meſſiah in view. In confirmation of this notion we adduce the evidence, that ariſes from the object, and the evidence, that ariſes from teſtimony.

In regard to the object we reaſon thus. All the fortieth pſalm, except one word, exactly applies to the Meſſiah. This inapplicable word, as it ſeems at firſt, is in the twelfth verſe, *mine iniquities have taken hold upon me.* This expreſſion does not ſeem proper in the mouth of Jeſus Chriſt, who, the prophets foretold, ſhould have
Iſai. liii. 9. *no deceit in his mouth*, and who, when he came, defied
John viii. 46. his enemies to *convince him of* a ſingle *ſin.* There is the ſame difficulty in a parallel pſalm, I mean the ſixty-
ver. 50. ninth, *O God! thou knoweſt my fooliſhneſs, and my ſins are not hid from thee.* The ſame ſolution ſerves for both places. Some have accounted for this difficulty by the genius of the Hebrew language, and have underſtood by the terms, *ſins* and *iniquities*, not any crimes, which the ſpeaker means to attribute to himſelf: but thoſe, which his perſecutors committed againſt him. In the ſtyle of the Jews, *my rebellion* ſometimes ſignifies *the rebellion, that is excited againſt me.* In this manner we account for an expreſſion in Jeremiah, *My people are attached to my rebellion*, that is to ſay, *My people perſiſt in rebelling againſt me.* So, again, we account for an expreſſion in the third of Lamentations, *O Lord thou haſt ſeen my wrong.* That is, *the wrong done to me.* In like man-
ver. 59. ner are thoſe words to be explained, *my fooliſhneſs, my ſins, my iniquities.*

But, if the idiom of the Hebrew language could not furniſh us with this ſolution, we ſhould not think the difficulty ſufficient to engage us to eraſe the fortieth pſalm from the liſt of prophecies, if other ſolid reaſons induced us to inſert it there. Jeſus Chriſt on the croſs

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was the ſubſtitute of ſinners, like the ſcape-goat, that was accurſed under the old diſpenſation, and, as he ſtood charged with the iniquities of his people, he was conſidered as the perpetrator of all the crimes of men. The ſcripture ſays in ſo many words, *he bare our ſins.* What a burden! What an inconceivable burden! Is the bearer of ſuch a burden chargeable with any exaggeration, when he cries, *My iniquities have taken hold upon me, ſo that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head?* This paſſage being thus explained, we affirm, there is nothing in this pſalm, which doth not exactly agree to the Meſſiah; and if we do not attempt now to prove what we have affirmed on this article, it is partly becauſe ſuch a diſcuſſion would divert us too far from our ſubject, and partly becauſe there ſeems to be very little difficulty in the application of each part of the pſalm to Jeſus Chriſt. SERM. VI. 1 Pet. ii. 25.

Moreover, the fortieth pſalm is parallel to other prophecies, which indiſputably belong to the Meſſiah. I mean particularly the ſixty-ninth pſalm, and the fifty-third chapter of Iſaiah. Were not the expoſitions of fallible men grounded on the teſtimonies of infallible writers, the nature of the thing would oblige us to admit the application. In whoſe mouth, except in that of the Meſſiah, could David with ſo much reaſon have put theſe words? *For thy ſake I have borne reproach; ſhame hath covered my face.* Of whom could Iſaiah ſo juſtly ſay as of the Meſſiah, *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions; he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him; and with his ſtripes we are healed. All we like ſheep have gone aſtray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Now if ye put the chapter and the pſalm, which we have quoted, among prophecies of the Meſſiah, ye will find no difficulty in adding the pſalm, from which our text is taken, becauſe they need only to be compared to prove that they ſpeak of the ſame ſubjects. Pſal. lxix. 7. liii. 5, 6.

Over

SERM. VI. Over and above the evidence, that ariſes from the object, we have the evidence of teſtimony. S. Paul declares, that the words of the Pſalmiſt are a prophecy, and that the myſtery of the incarnation was the accompliſhment of it. After a deciſion ſo reſpectable, it ill becomes us to reply.

I very well know what the enemies of our myſteries ſay againſt this reaſoning, and againſt all our arguments of this kind, by which we have uſually derived the myſteries of the Goſpel from the writings of the prophets. Jeſus Chriſt, ſay they, and his apoſtles, reaſoned from the prophecies only for the ſake of accommodating themſelves to the genius of the Jews, who were always fond of finding myſteries in the writings of their ſacred authors, even in the moſt ſimple parts of them. What ye take, continue they, for explications of prophecies in the writers of the New Teſtament, are only ingenious applications, or more properly, ſay they, accommodations. But what! when Philip joined himſelf to the Ethiopian treaſurer, who was reading the fifty-third of Iſaiah, and who put this queſtion to him, *I pray thee of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of ſome other man?* When *he began at the ſame ſcripture, and preached unto him Jeſus*; did he mean only to accommodate himſelf to the genius of the Jewiſh nation? What! when S. Matthew, ſpeaking of John the Baptiſt, ſaid, *This is he, that was ſpoken of by the prophet Eſaias, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs*; and when John the Baptiſt, in anſwer to thoſe queſtions, which the Jews, whom the prieſts ſent, put to him, *Who art thou? Art thou Elias? Art thou that prophet?* When he replied, *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderneſs*, did he mean only to accommodate himſelf to the prejudices of the Jews? What! when Jeſus Chriſt after his reſurrection taxed his diſciples with folly, becauſe they had not diſcovered his reſurrection in the ancient prophecies; and when, *beginning at Moſes, and all the prophets*, he derived from thence

Acts viii. 34, 35.

iii. 3.

John i. 19. 21. 23.

Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 27.

thence arguments to prove that Chriſt *ought to have ſuffered, and to enter into his glory*; had he no other deſign than that of making ingenious applications, and of accommodating himſelf to the prejudices of the Jewiſh nation? And is this the deſign of S. Paul in my text? Hear how he ſpeaks, how he reaſons, how he concludes. *It is not poſſible*, ſays he, *that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he ſaith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings, and ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure: then ſaid I, Lo! I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me.) to do thy will, O God!* Having ſaid before, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not*, which things are appointed by the law, he adds, *Lo! I come to do thy will, O God! He taketh away the firſt, that he may eſtabliſh the ſecond. By the which will we are ſanctified, through the offering of the body of Jeſus Chriſt, once for all.* Do people ſpeak in this manner, when they make only ingenious applications, and when reaſoning is carried on by dexterity and accommodation? SERM. VI.

Audacious hereſy, my brethren! which, having firſt offered violence to the expreſſions of the prophets, proceeds to offer violence again to the deciſions of the evangeliſts, and apoſtles, the interpreters of the prophets; and with equal preſumption contradicts a prophecy, and an interpretation as infallible as prophecy itſelf! There is great ſimplicity, I allow, in a turn for the marvellous, and in obliging ones ſelf to find the Meſſiah in the moſt unlikely paſſages in the prophecies: but there is alſo a great deal of obſtinacy in denying demonſtrations ſo palpable and plain.

The words of my text are then a quotation, and, we think, we have juſtified it. We are now to conſider it, ſecondly, as *a difficult paſſage, that needs elucidation.*

The principal difficulty in my preſent view is in theſe words, *A body haſt thou prepared me.* The Hebrew has it, *thou haſt digged, bored,* or *opened mine ears.* The ex-

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expreſſion is figurative: but it is very intelligible even to thoſe, who are but little acquainted with ſacred hiſtory. None of you can be ignorant, that it is an alluſion to a law recorded in the twenty-firſt chapter of Exodus, where they, who had Hebrew-ſlaves, were ordered to releaſe them in the ſabbatical year. A proviſion is made for ſuch ſlaves as refuſed to accept of this privilege. Their maſters were to bring them to the doors of their houſes, to bore their ears through with an awl, and they were to engage to continue ſlaves *for ever*, that is to ſay, till the year of Jubilee, or till their death, if they happened to die before that feſtival. As this action was expreſſive of the moſt entire devotedneſs of a ſlave to his maſter, it was very natural for the prophet to make it an emblem of the perfect obedience of Jeſus Chriſt to his Father's will. A paſſage of our apoſtle exactly agrees with theſe words of the prophet. *Jeſus Chriſt made himſelf of no reputation, took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men. And, being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs.* This is the beſt comment on the words of the pſalmiſt, *Thou haſt bored mine ears.*

Phil. ii. 7, 8.

But why did not S. Paul quote the words as they are in the pſalm? Why, inſtead of rendering the words according to the Hebrew, *Thou haſt bored mine ears*, did he render them, *Thou haſt prepared me a body?* It is plain the apoſtle followed the *verſion* commonly called that of the *ſeventy*. But this remark, far from removing the difficulty, produces a new one. For it may be aſked why did the *ſeventy* render the original words in this manner? As this is a famous queſtion, and as the diſcuſſion of it may ſerve to caſt light on many other paſſages of ſcripture, it will not be an unprofitable waſte of time to enquire into the matter. Our people often hear this verſion mentioned in our pulpits, and they ought to have, at leaſt, a general knowledge of it.

By

By the *Septuagint*, or *the verſion of the ſeventy*, we mean a Greek tranſlation of the old Teſtament, made about three hundred years before the birth of Jeſus Chriſt, and it derived its name from a common report, that ſeventy, or ſeventy-two interpreters were the authors of it. One hiſtory, (or, ſhall I rather call it, one romance?) attributed to an officer of Ptolomy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, ſays, that this prince, intending to collect a library at Alexandria, employed a learned Athenian, named Demetrius Phalareus, to execute his deſign — That he informed the king, that the Jews were in poſſeſſion of a book containing the laws of their legiſlator — that Ptolemy deputed three officers of his court to wait on the high-prieſt at Jeruſalem, to require of him a copy of the book, and men capable of tranſlating it into Greek — that, in order to conciliate the Jews, and to obtain this favour, he releaſed a hundred thouſand ſlaves, who had been held captives in his kingdom, and amply furniſhed them with all neceſſaries for their return to Judea — that he loaded his deputies with rich preſents for the temple — that the high-prieſt not only gave them a copy of the law: but alſo ſent ſix men of each tribe to tranſlate it — that Ptolemy received them with marks of great diſtinction, and lodged them in the iſle of Pharos, where they might purſue their work without interruption — and that they finiſhed the work in as many days as there were authors labouring at it, that is to ſay, in ſeventy-two. SERM. VI.

This narration being favourably received among the Jews, it happened, that the ſuperſtition of the populace, fomented by their own ignorance, and by the raſh deciſions of the Rabbies, which were put in the place of ſolid proofs, added divers circumſtances to render the tale more marvellous. Of this kind is the account given by Philo, who ſays, that each of the ſeventy tranſlators purſued his work ſeparately from the reſt, and that, when the tranſlations of all came to

SERM. VI. be compared, there was not the leaſt difference either in the meaning, or in the expreſſions. Of the ſame ſort is another circumſtance related by Juſtin Martyr. Each tranſlator, ſays he, was confined in a little cell, in order to prevent his holding any converſation with the reſt of the interpreters; and this good father pretends to have ſeen the ruins of theſe cells in the iſle of Pharos. We will not increaſe the liſt of theſe fabulous tales here, let it ſuffice to obſerve, that learned men have long agreed to reject theſe fables; and have fully ſhewn the paradoxes, the anachroniſms, and the contradictions, with which they are replete. We proceed now to relate what they have almoſt unanimouſly admitted.

That, about three hundred years before the advent of Jeſus Chriſt, a Greek tranſlation of the old Teſtament was made at Alexandria for the uſe of the deſcendants of that multitude of Jews, which Alexander the great had ſettled there, when he built that famous city in Egypt, to which he gave his own name—That a verſion was abſolutely neceſſary for thoſe people, becauſe the far greater part of them had loſt their native language — That at firſt the five books of Moſes only were tranſlated, becauſe they were the only books, which were then read in the ſynagogues— That after the tyrannies of Antiochus Epiphanes, the reading of the prophecies being then introduced, the prophecies alſo were tranſlated — That this verſion was ſpread through all thoſe parts of the world, where the Greek language was uſed, or where Jews dwelt — And that the apoſtles, preaching the Goſpel in the greateſt part of the known world, and the Greek tongue being then every where the favourite of all, who valued themſelves on learning and politeneſs, made uſe of the verſion, commonly called the verſion of the ſeventy, to convince the Pagans, that the different parts of the œconomy of the Meſſiah had been foretold by the prophets, and that this verſion was one of

of the preparations, which providence had employed for the call of the Gentiles. SERM. VI.

This digreſſion thus going before us, I will relate the replies, that are uſually made to the queſtion before us, namely, why the pretended ſeventy rendered the prophecy, as in our text, *A body haſt thou prepared me*, inſtead of tranſlating it according to the literal Hebrew, *Mine ears haſt thou bored.*

Some learned men have pretended, that the tranſlation of our prophecy was altered in our copies of the ſeventy, and that we ſhould read *ears* inſtead of *body*. But the reaſons, on which this ſolution is grounded, appear to us ſo inconcluſive, that, far from eſtabliſhing a fixed ſentiment, they hardly ſeem capable of ſupporting a momentary conjecture.

Beſide, if this reading, *A body haſt thou prepared me*, be faulty, how came S. Paul to avail himſelf of the verſion of the ſeventy to give currency to a thought, which was not theirs, and to perſuade the illiterate that theſe interpreters had tranſlated the words *A body haſt thou prepared me*, when indeed they had rendered the words *Mine ears haſt thou bored?* How could S. Paul employ a fraud ſo groſs to eſtabliſh one of the moſt venerable myſteries of chriſtianity, I mean, the doctrine of the incarnation? Had not his own conſcience reſtrained him, a foreſight of the reproaches, to which he muſt neceſſarily have expoſed himſelf by ſuch conduct, muſt needs have prevented it.

This firſt ſolution not appearing defenſible to moſt learned men, they have had recourſe to the following. The ſeventy tranſlators, ſay they, or the authors of this verſion, that bears their name, whoever they were, knew the myſtery of the incarnation; they were convinced, that this myſtery was foretold in the fortieth Pſalm; and as Jeſus Chriſt could not perform the functions of a ſervant, without uniting himſelf to a mortal body, they choſe rather to give the meaning of the prophecy than to render the bare terms of it.

SERM. VI. Some have even gone ſo far as to affirm, that the ſeventy did this by the inſpiration of the holy Ghoſt. This ſolution has one great advantage, it favours the theological ſyſtem of thoſe, who admit it, and every ſolution of this kind, will always have, independently on the accuracy and juſtneſs of it, the ſuffrages of great numbers. This opinion, however, is not free from difficulty. Do not the miſtakes, of which this verſion is full, and which the apoſtles have often corrected in their quotations of it, form inſuperable objections againſt the imaginary doctrine of their inſpiration? But if the authors of this verſion had not been inſpired, would it have been poſſible for them to have ſpoken of the myſtery of the incarnation in a manner more clear than any of the prophets? This difficulty appears to me the greater, becauſe I cannot find any Rabbi, (I except none.) who ever underſtood the prophecy in the fortieth Pſalm of the Meſſiah. It is S. Paul alone, who gives us the true ſenſe of it.

The conjectures, that I have mentioned, appear to me very uncertain; I therefore hazard my own private opinion on the ſubject, and that proof, which, I think, is the moſt proper to make it eligible, I mean the great ſimplicity of it, will be perhaps (conſidering the great love, that almoſt all men have for the marvellous.) the chief reaſon for rejecting it. However, I will propoſe it.

I remark firſt, that the word uſed by the pretended ſeventy, and by S. Paul, and rendered in our language *prepared*, is one of the moſt vague terms in the Greek tongue, and ſignifies indifferently, *to diſpoſe*, *to mark*, *to note*, *to render capable*, and ſo on. This remark is ſo well grounded, that they, who think the ſeptuagint reading uſed the word *ears* inſtead of *body*, retain, however, the term in queſtion, ſo that, according to them, it may ſignify *bore*, *cut*, &c.

I obſerve ſecondly, that before the ſeptuagint verſion the Moſaic rites were very little known among the

the heathens, perhaps alſo among the diſperſed Jews; it was a very common thing with the Rabbies to endeavour to conceal them from all, except the inhabitants of Judea, for reaſons, which I need not mention now. Hence I infer, that in the period, of which I am ſpeaking, few people knew the cuſtom of boring the ears of thoſe ſlaves, who refuſed to accept the privileges of the ſabbatical year. I ſay in this period, not after; for we find in the writings of thoſe Pagans, who lived in after-times, and particularly in the ſatyrs of Petronius and Juvenal, alluſions to this cuſtom. SERM. VI.

I obſerve thirdly, that it was a general cuſtom among the Pagans to make marks on the bodies of thoſe perſons, in whom they claimed a property. They were made on ſoldiers, and ſlaves, ſo that, if they deſerted, they might be eaſily reclaimed. Sometimes they appoſed marks on them, who ſerved an apprentice-ſhip to a maſter, as well as on them, who put themſelves under the protection of a God. Theſe marks were called *ſtigmas*; the word has paſſed into other languages, and S. Paul, probably, alludes to this cuſtom in his Epiſtle to the Galatians, where he ſays, *from henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus.* Ye may ſee ſeveral ſuch alluſions in the ninth of Ezekiel, and in the ſeventh of Revelations, where they, who had put themſelves under the protection of God, and had devoted themſelves to his ſervice, are repreſented as marked in the forehead with a certain mark reſpectable by the meſſengers of his avenging juſtice. Chap. vi. 17.

On theſe different obſervations I ground this opinion. The ſeventy, or the authors of the verſion, that bears their name, whoever they were, thought, if they tranſlated the prophecy under conſideration literally, it would be unintelligible to the Pagans and to the diſperſed Jews, who, being ignorant of the cuſtom, to which the text refers, would not be able to comprehend the meaning of the words, *mine ears haſt thou bored.*

To

SERM. VI. To prevent this inconvenience, they tranſlated the paſſage in that way, which was moſt proper to convey its meaning to the readers. It was well known, that the Pagans marked the bodies of their ſoldiers, and ſlaves, and diſciples. Our authors alluded to this cuſtom, and tranſlated the words in general, *thou haſt marked my body*, or, *thou haſt diſpoſed my body*, that is to ſay, *thou haſt diſpoſed it in the way, which is moſt agreeable to the functions, in which I am engaging.* Now as this tranſlation was well adapted to convey the meaning of the prophet to the Pagans, S. Paul had a right to retain it.

Thus we have endeavoured to explain the greateſt difficulty in the terms of the text. The following words, *In the volume of the book it is written of me*, refer to the manner, in which the ancients diſpoſed their books. They wrote on parchments, faſtened one to another, and made rolls of them. The Hebrew term, which S. Paul, and the pretended ſeventy, render *book*, ſignifies a roll; and, ſome think, the Greek term, which we render *beginning*, † and which properly ſignifies a *head*, alludes to the form of theſe rolls: but theſe remarks ought not to detain us.

Jeſus Chriſt, we are very certain, is introduced in this place as accompliſhing what the prophets had foretold; that is, that the ſacrifice of the Meſſiah ſhould be ſubſtituted in the place of the levitical victims. On this account, as we ſaid before, our text contains one of the moſt eſſential doctrines of the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, and the eſtabliſhment of this is our next article.

In order to comprehend the ſenſe, in which the Meſſiah ſays to God, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not*, we muſt diſtinguiſh two ſorts of volition in God, *a willing of a mean*, and *a willing of an end.* God may be ſaid to

† *Il eſt ecrit de moi au commencement du livre.* It is written of me in the *beginning* of the book. Fr.

It is written of me in the *volume* of the book. Eng.

to *will a mean*, when he appoints a ceremony or eſta- SERM.
bliſheth a rite, which hath no intrinſic excellence in VI.
itſelf: but which prepares them, on whom it is enjoined, for ſome great events, on which their felicity depends. By *willing an end* I mean a production of ſuch events.

If the word *will* be taken in the firſt ſenſe, it cannot be truly ſaid, that God *did not will* or appoint *ſacrifices and burnt-offerings*. Every one knows, he inſtituted them, and regulated the whole ceremonial of them, even the moſt minute articles. On this account, S. Paul obſerves, when God had given Moſes directions concerning the conſtruction of the tabernacle, he ſaid to him, *See that thou make all things according to the pattern ſhewed to thee in the mount.* Heb. viii. 5.

But if we take the word *will* in the ſecond ſenſe, and by the will of God underſtand his willing an end, it is ſtrictly true, that God did *not will* or appoint *ſacrifices and burnt-offerings*; becauſe they were only inſtituted to prefigure the Meſſiah, and conſequently as ſoon as the Meſſiah, the ſubſtance, appeared, all the ceremonies of the law were intended to vaniſh.

Now, as we ſaid in the beginning of this diſcourſe, the Hebrews, who were cotemporary with S. Paul, thoſe, I mean, who made a profeſſion of Chriſtianity, had great occaſion for this doctrine. If their attachment to the levitical ritual did not operate ſo far as to hinder their embracing the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, it muſt be allowed, it was one of the principal obſtacles to their entering into the true ſpirit of it. The apoſtles diſcovered, for a long time, a great deal of indulgence to thoſe, who were miſled by their prejudice. S. Paul, a perfect model of that Chriſtian indulgence and toleration, which the conſciences of erroneous brethren require, *became, to the Jews, a Jew*; and, far from affecting to degrade the ceremonies of the law, obſerved them with a ſcrupulous exactneſs himſelf.

But when it was perceived, as it ſoon was, that the attachment of the Jews to the ceremonies of the law, and par-

SERM. VI. particularly to ſacrifices, was injurious to the ſacrifice of the croſs, the apoſtles thought it their duty vigorouſly to oppoſe ſuch dangerous prejudices, and this is the deſign of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, in which S. Paul eſtabliſheth his theſis, I mean the inutility of ſacrifices, on four deciſive arguments. The firſt is taken from the nature of theſe ſacrifices. The ſecond is derived from the declarations of the prophets. The third is inferred from types. And the laſt ariſes from the excellence of the Goſpel-victim.

Heb. x. 4. *It is not poſſible*, ſays the apoſtle immediately before my text, *that the blood of bulls and of goats ſhould take away ſin*; this is as much as to ſay, the blood of irrational victims is not of value ſufficient to ſatisfy the juſtice of God, righteouſly expreſſing his diſpleaſure with the ſins of intelligent creatures. This is an argument taken from the *nature of ſacrifices*.

ch. viii. 8, 9. *Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah: not according to the covenant, that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.* This is an argument taken from the *deciſions of the prophets*.

vii. 17. 1, &c. Jeſus Chriſt is a *prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedech. For this Melchiſedech, king of Salem, prieſt of the moſt high God, who met Abraham returning from the ſlaughter of the kings, and bleſſed him; to whom alſo Abraham gave a tenth part of all; firſt being by interpretation king of righteouſneſs, and after that alſo, king of Salem, which is king of peace; without father, without mother, without deſcent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth*

x. 1. *a prieſt continually. The law was a ſhadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.* This is an argument taken from *types*.

The argument taken from *the excellence of the victim* runs through this whole epiſtle, and has as many parts as there are characters of dignity in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, and in his prieſthood.

The

The firſt character of dignity is this. Jeſus Chriſt is neither a mere man, nor an angel, he is *the Son of God, the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. He upholds all things by the word of his power,* and of him, when he came into the world, it was ſaid, *Let all the angels of God worſhip him.* He, in a word, hath the perfections of the ſupreme God, and to him the pſalmiſt rendered the homage of adoration, when he ſaid, *Thy throne O God! is for ever and ever; a ſcepter of righteouſneſs is the ſcepter of thy kingdom. Thou, Lord! in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They ſhall periſh: but thou remaineſt; and they all ſhall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.* SERM. VI. Heb. i. 3. 6. 8.

The ſolemnity of the inſtituting of Jeſus Chriſt is a ſecond character of dignity. *Chriſt glorified not himſelf to be made an high prieſt: but* it was God, who *ſaid unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* ch. v. 5.

The ſacred oath, that accompanies the promiſes, which Jeſus Chriſt alone fulfils, is a third character of dignity. *When God made promiſe to Abraham, becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf, ſaying, Surely, bleſſing, I will bleſs thee. The prieſts,* under the law, *were made without an oath: but this with an oath, by him that ſaid unto him, The Lord ſware, and will not repent, Thou art a prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedech.* vi. 14. vii. 21.

The unity of the prieſt and the ſacrifice is a fourth character of dignity. *They truly were many prieſts, becauſe they were not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death: but this man, becauſe he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable prieſthood.* 23, 24.

The fifth character of dignity is the magnificence of that tabernacle, into which Jeſus Chriſt entered, and the merit of that blood, which obtained his acceſs into it. *The firſt covenant had a worldly ſanctuary,* into ix. 1.

SERM. VI. Heb. ix. 6, 7. 11, 12. 24. the firſt room of which *the prieſts went always, accompliſhing the ſervice of God*; and *into the ſecond the high-prieſt alone went once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himſelf, and for the errors of the people. But Chriſt, being come a high-prieſt of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, neither by the blood of bulls and calves, but by his own blood, entered not into holy places made with hands, which were figures of the true: but into heaven itſelf, now to appear in the preſence of God for us.*

To what purpoſe are Levitical ſacrifices, of what uſe are Jewiſh prieſts, what occaſion have we for hecatombs, and offerings, after the ſacrifice of a victim ſo excellent? My text contains one of the moſt eſſential doctrines of chriſtianity, that Jeſus Chriſt offered himſelf for us to the juſtice of his Father. This is a doctrine, the evidences of which we all receive with joy; a doctrine, the enemies of which we conſider with horror; a doctrine, of which we have the higheſt reaſon to be hollily jealous, becauſe it is the foundation of that confidence, with which we come boldly to the throne of Grace, throughout life, and in the article of death: but a doctrine, however, that will be entirely uſeleſs to us, unleſs, while we take Jeſus Chriſt for our redeemer, we take him alſo for our example. The text is not only the language of Jeſus Chriſt, who ſubſtitutes himſelf in the place of Old-Teſtament ſacrifices; but it is the voice of David, and of every believer, who, full of this juſt ſentiment, that a perſonal dedication to the ſervice of God is the moſt acceptable ſacrifice, that men can offer to the deity, devote themſelves entirely to him. How foreign ſoever this ſecond ſenſe may appear from the firſt, there is nothing in it, that ought to ſurprize you. This is not the only paſſage of holy ſcripture, which contains a myſtical as well as a literal ſignification, nor is this the firſt time in which the diſpoſitions of inſpired men have been emblems of thoſe of the Meſſiah.

Let

Let us juſtify this ſecond ſenſe of our text. Come, my brethren, adopt the words, ſay with the prophet, and thus prepare yourſelves for the celebration of the feſtival of the nativity, which is juſt at hand, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not: but a body haſt thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings and ſacrifices for ſin thou haſt had no pleaſure: then ſaid I, Lo! I come*, as it is *written in the volume of the book, to do thy will, O God!* This is the ſecond part, or rather the application of this diſcourſe. SERM. VII.

II. *God willeth not ſacrifices.* The meaning of theſe words is eaſily underſtood, I preſume. They ſignify, that the only offering, which God requires of us, is that of our perſons. Recollect a diſtinction, which we made a little while ago, to juſtify the firſt ſenſe of the text, and which is equally proper to explain the ſecond. There is in God a twofold will, *a willing of means*, and, *a willing of an end.* If the word *will* be taken in the firſt ſenſe, it cannot be ſaid, *God willeth*, or deſireth, *not ſacrifices.* He appointed them as *means* to conduct us to that *end*, which he intended, that is, to the offering of our perſons.

I have been delighted to find this idea developed in the writings of thoſe very Jews, who of all men have the ſtrongeſt inclination to exceed in reſpect for the ceremonial of religion. I have my eye on a work of a Rabbi, the moſt reſpectable, and the moſt reſpected, of all, who are ſo called, I mean *Moſes Maimonides.* The book is entitled, *A guide to doubting ſouls.** Under how many faces does he preſent this diſtinction? On what ſolid foundations does he take care to eſtabliſh it? I ſhould weaken the arguments of this learned Jew by abridging them, and I refer all, who are capable of reading it, to the book itſelf. Ye underſtand then in what ſenſe God demands only the ſacrifice of your perſons. It is what he wills as the end; and he will accept neither offerings, nor ſacrifices, nor all the ceremonies

* More Nevochim.

SERM. VI. monies of religion, unleſs they contribute to the holineſs of the perſon, who offers them.

Let us not reſt in theſe vague ideas: but let us briefly cloſe this diſcourſe by obſerving, 1. The nature of this offering. 2. The neceſſity of it. 3. The difficulties. 4. The delights, that accompany it; and laſtly, its reward.

1. Obſerve the *nature* of this ſacrifice. This offering includes our whole perſons, and every thing, that providence hath put in our power. Two ſorts of things may be diſtinguiſhed in the victim, of which God requires the ſacrifice; the one bad, the other good. We are engaged in vicious habits, we are carried away with irregular propenſities, we are ſlaves to criminal paſſions; all theſe are our bad things. We are capable of knowledge, meditation, and love; we poſſeſs riches, reputation, employments, and ſo on; theſe are our good things. God demands the ſacrifice of both theſe. Say to God in both ſenſes, *Lo! I come to do thy will, O God!* Whatever ye have of the bad, ſacrifice to God, and conſume it in ſpiritual burnt-offering. Sacrifice to him the infernal pleaſure of ſlander. Sacrifice to him the brutal paſſions, that enſlave your ſenſes. Sacrifice to him that avarice, which gnaws and devours you. Sacrifice to him that pride, and preſumption, which ſwell a mortal into imaginary conſequence, diſguiſe him from himſelf, make him forget his original duſt, and hide from his eyes his future putrefaction.

But alſo ſacrifice your good things to God. You have genius. Dedicate it to God. Employ it in meditating on his oracles, in rectifying your own ideas, and in diffuſing through the world by your converſation and writing the knowledge of this adorable being. You have the art of inſinuating your opinions into the minds of men. Devote it to God, uſe it to undeceive your acquaintances, to open their eyes, and to inſpire them with inclinations more worthy of immortal ſouls, than thoſe which uſually govern them. You have credit,

credit. Dedicate it to God, ſtrive againſt your own indolence, ſurmount the obſtacles, that ſurround you, open your doors to widows and orphans, who wiſh for your protection. You have a fortune. Devote it to God, uſe it for the ſuccour of indigent families, employ it for the relief of the ſick, who languiſh friendleſs on beds of infirmity, let it help forward the lawful deſires of them, who, hungering and thirſting for righteouſneſs, wander in the deſerts of *Hermon*, and pour out theſe complaints on the hill *Mizar*, *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God! My ſoul thirſteth for God. My fleſh crieth out for thine altars, O Lord of hoſts, my king, and my God.* SERM. VII. Pſal. xlii. 6. 1, &c. lxxxiv. 2, 3.

Having obſerved the nature of that offering, which God requires of you, conſider next the *neceſſity* of it. I will not load this article with a multitude of proofs. I will not repeat the numerous declarations, that the inſpired writers have made on this ſubject. I will neither inſiſt on this of Samuel, *To obey is better than ſacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* Nor on this of the pſalmiſt, *Unto the wicked, God ſaith, What haſt thou to do to declare my ſtatutes, or that thou ſhouldeſt take my covenant in thy mouth ſeeing thou hateſt inſtruction? The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit.* Nor on this of Iſaiah, *To what purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me, ſaith the Lord? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beaſts; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes.* Nor on this of Jeremiah, *Put your burnt-offerings unto your ſacrifices, and eat fleſh. But I commanded not your fathers, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings, or ſacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, ſaying, Obey my voice,* and *truſt not in lying words, ſaying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are theſe. Behold ye truſt in lying words. Do not ſteal, Do no murder, Do not commit adultery.* Nor will I inſiſt on many other declarations of this kind, with which ſcripture abounds: I have no need of any other teſtimony than that of your own conſciences.

1 Sam. xv. 22. Pſal. l. 16, 17. li. 17. Iſai. i. 11, 16. Jer. vii. 21, 22, 23. ver. 4. 9.

To

SERM. VI. To what purpoſe do ye attend public worſhip in a church conſecrated to the ſervice of Almighty God, if ye refuſe to make your bodies temples of the holy Ghoſt, and perſiſt in devoting them to impurity? To what purpoſe do ye hear ſermons, if, as ſoon as the preacher has finiſhed, ye forget all the duties, that he has recommended? To what purpoſe do ye ſpread your miſeries in prayer before God, while ye neglect all the means, by which he has promiſed to relieve them? To what purpoſe do ye approach the table of the Lord, if, a few days after ye have partaken of the ſacred elements, ye violate all your vows, break all your promiſes, and forget the ſolemn adjurations, which you made there? To what purpoſe do ye ſend for your miniſters, when death ſeems to be approaching, if, as ſoon as ye recover from ſickneſs, ye return to the ſame kind of life, the remembrance of which cauſed you ſo much horror, when ye were ſick, and afraid of death?

The ſacrifice required of us is *difficult*, ſay ye. I grant it, my brethren, accordingly, far from pretending to conceal it, I make one article of the difficulties and pains that accompany it. How extremely difficult, when our reputation and honour are attacked, when our fidelity, our morals, our converſation, our very intentions are miſinterpreted, and ſlandered; how extremely difficult, when we are perſecuted and oppreſſed by cruel and unjuſt enemies; how hard is it to practiſe the laws of religion, which require us to pardon injuries, and to exerciſe patience and mercy to our enemies! How difficult is it to imitate the example of Jeſus Chriſt, who, when he hung on the croſs, prayed for them, who nailed him there; how hard is it thus to ſacrifice to God our reſentment and vengeance! How difficult is it to ſacrifice unjuſt gains to God, by reſtoring them to their owners; how hard to retrench expences, which we cannot honeſtly ſupport, to reform a table, that gratifies the ſenſes, to diminiſh the number of our attendants, which does us honour, to lay aſide

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equipages, that ſurround us with pomp, and to reduce our expences to our incomes! How difficult is it, when all our wiſhes are united in the gratification of a favourite paſſion, O! how hard is it to free ones ſelf from its dominion! How difficult is it to eradicate an old criminal habit, to reform, and to renew one's-ſelf, to form, as it were, a different conſtitution, to create other eyes, other ears, another body! How hard is it, when death approacheth, to bid the world farewell for ever, for ever to part from friends, parents and children! In general, how difficult is it, to ſurmount that world of obſtacles, which oppoſe us in our path to eternal happineſs, to devote one's-ſelf entirely to God in a world, where all the objects of our ſenſes ſeem to conſpire to detach us from him! SERM. VI.

But, is this ſacrifice the leſs neceſſary, becauſe it is difficult? Do the diſagreeables and difficulties, which accompany it, invalidate the neceſſity of it? Let us add ſomething of the comforts, that belong to it, they will ſoften the yoke, that religion puts upon us, and encourage us in our arduous purſuit of immortal joy. Look, reckon, multiply, as long as ye will, the hardſhips and pains of this ſacrifice, they can never equal the pleaſures and rewards of it.

What *delight*, after we have laboured hard at the reduction of our paſſions, and the reformation of our hearts; what delight, after we have ſtriven, or, to uſe the language of Jeſus Chriſt, after we have been in *an agony*, in endeavouring to reſiſt the torrent, and to ſurvive, if poſſible, the dreadful ſtorm, that involves the chriſtian in his paſſage; what delight to find, that heaven crowns our wiſhes with ſucceſs!

What delight, when, on examining conſcience preparatory to the Lord's-ſupper, a man is able to ſay to himſelf. "Once, I was a ſordid, ſelfiſh wretch; now "my happineſs is to aſſiſt my neighbour. Formerly, "my thoughts were diſſipated in prayer, my devotions "were interrupted by worldly objects, of which the "whole

SERM. VI. "whole capacity of my ſoul was full; now, I am "enabled to collect my thoughts in my cloſet, and to "fix them on that God, in communion with whom "I paſs the happieſt hours of my life. Once, I reliſh-"ed nothing but the world and its pleaſures; now, my "ſoul breathes only piety and religion." What high ſatisfaction, when old age arrives, when our days are paſſing *ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle*, to be able to give a good account of our conduct, and, while the laſt moments fly, to fill them with the remembrance of a life well-ſpent! When our ſins preſent themſelves before us in all their enormity; when we find ourſelves
Pſal. li. 3. in the ſituation mentioned by the pſalmiſt, *My ſin is ever before me*, the image of bloody Uriah haunts me every where, then how happy to be enabled to ſay, "I have wept for theſe ſins, in the bitterneſs of peni-"tence I have loſt the remembrance of pleaſure in ſin; "and I truſt, by the grace of God, I am guarded "againſt future attacks from them."

Such are the pleaſures of this ſacrifice: but what are its *rewards!* Let us only try to form an idea of the manner in which God gives himſelf to a ſoul, that devotes itſelf wholly to him. Ah! if *we love him*, is it not *becauſe he firſt loved us?* Alas! to what degree ſoever we elevate our love to him, it is nothing in compariſon of his love to us! What ſhall I ſay to you, my brethren, on the love of God to us? What ſhall I ſay, of the bleſſings, which he pours on theſe ſtates, and on the individuals who compoſe them, of the reſtoration of peace, the confirmation of your liberties, the preſervation of your lives, the long-ſuffering, that he exerciſes toward your ſouls? Above all, what ſhall I ſay concerning that great myſtery, the anniverſary of which the church invites you to celebrate next Lord's-
John iii. 16. day? *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.*

A God, who has loved us in this manner, when we were enemies to him, how will he not love us, now we

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are become his friends, now we dedicate to him our- SERM.
ſelves, and all beſide, that we poſſeſs? What bounds VI.
can be ſet to his love? *He that ſpared not his own Son,* Rom. viii.
but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him 32.
alſo freely give us all things? Here I ſink under the
weight of my ſubject. *O my God! how great is thy* Pſal. xxxi.
goodneſs, which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee! 19.
My God! what will not the felicity of that creature be, who gives himſelf wholly to thee, as thou giveſt thyſelf to him!

Thus, my dear brethren, religion is nothing but gratitude, ſenſibility, and love. God grant, we may know it in this manner! May the knowledge of it fill the heart and mouth of each of us, during our feſtivals, and from this moment to the hour of death, with the language of my text, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldeſt not, but a body haſt thou prepared me. In burnt-offerings for ſin, thou haſt had no pleaſure: Then ſaid I, Lo! I come. I come,* as *it is written in the volume of the book, to do thy will, O God!* May God condeſcend to confirm our reſolutions by his grace. Amen.

SERMON VII.

The EFFICACY of the DEATH of CHRIST.

PREACHED ON EASTER-DAY.

SERMON VII.

The EFFICACY of the DEATH of CHRIST.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 14, 15.

The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us; becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that *he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.*

MY BRETHREN,

WE have great deſigns to day on you, and we have great means of executing them. Sometimes we require the moſt difficult duties of morality of you. At other times we preach the mortification of the ſenſes to you, and, with S. Paul, we tell you, *they, that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections and luſts.* Gal. v. 24. Sometimes we attack your attachment to riches, and, after the example of our great maſter, we exhort you to *lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor ſteal.* Matth. vi. 20. At other times we endeavour to prepare you for ſome violent operation, ſome ſevere exerciſes, with which it may pleaſe God to try you, and we repeat the words of the apoſtle to the Hebrews, *Ye have not yet reſiſted unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin; Wherefore lift up the hands, which hang down, and the feeble knees.* Heb. xii. 4. 12. At other times we ſummon you to ſuffer a death more painful than your own; we require you to diſſolve the tender ties, that

SERM. VII. that unite your hearts to your relatives, and friends; we adjure you to break the bonds, that conſtitute all the happineſs of your lives, and we utter this language, or, ſhall I rather ſay, thunder this terrible gradation in the name of Almighty God, *Take now thy ſon—thine only ſon—Iſaac—whom thou loveſt—and offer him for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of.* To day we demand all theſe. We require more than the ſacrifice of your ſenſes, more than that of your riches, more than that of your impatience, more than that of an only ſon; we demand an univerſal devotedneſs of yourſelves to *the author and finiſher of your faith*; and, to repeat the emphatical language of my text, which, in its extenſive compaſs involves, and includes all theſe duties, we require you *henceforth not to live unto yourſelves: but unto him, who died and roſe again for you.*

Gen. xxii. 2.

As we have great deſigns on you, ſo we have great means of executing them. They are not only a few of the attractives of religion. They are not only ſuch efforts as your miniſters ſometimes make, when, uniting all their ſtudies and all their abilities, they approach you with the power of the word. It is not only an auguſt ceremony, or a ſolemn feſtival. They are all theſe put together. God hath aſſembled them all in the marvellous tranſactions of this one day.

Here are all the atractives of religion. Here are all the united efforts of your miniſters, who unanimouſly employ on theſe occaſions all the penetration of their minds, all the tenderneſs of their hearts, all the power of language to awake your piety, and to incline you to render to Jeſus Chriſt love for love, and life for life. It is an auguſt ceremony, in which, under the moſt ſimple ſymbols, that nature affords, God repreſents the moſt ſublime objects of religion to you. This is a ſolemn feſtival, the moſt ſolemn feſtival, that chriſtians obſerve, this occaſions them to expreſs in ſongs of the higheſt joy their gratitude and praiſe to their deliverer, theſe

theſe are their ſentiments, and thus they exult, *The right hand of the Lord doth valiantly! Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt. Bleſſed be God, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead.* SERM. VII. Pſ. cxviii. 15. Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3.

And on what days, is it natural to ſuppoſe, ſhould the preaching of the Goſpel perform thoſe miracles, which are promiſed to it, if not on ſuch days as theſe? When, if not on ſuch days as theſe, ſhould *the ſword of the ſpirit divide aſunder ſoul and ſpirit, joints and marrow,* and cut in twain every bond of ſelf-love and ſin? Eph. vi. 17. Heb. iv. 12.

To all theſe means add the ſupernatural aſſiſtance, that God communicates in a double portion in theſe circumſtances to all thoſe, whom a deſire of reconciliation with heaven conducts to this aſſembly. We have prayed for this aſſiſtance at the dawning of this bleſſed day; we prayed for it as we aſcended this pulpit, and again before we began this exerciſe; with prayer for divine aſſiſtance we began this diſcourſe, and now we are going to pray for it again. My dear brethren, unite your prayers with ours, and let us mutually ſay to God:

O thou *rock* of ages! thou author of thoſe great myſteries, with which the whole chriſtian world reſounds to day! make thy *work perfect.* Let the end of all theſe myſteries be the ſalvation of this people. Yea Lord! the incarnation of thy word; the ſufferings, to which thou didſt expoſe him; the vials of thy wrath, poured on this victim, innocent indeed in himſelf, but criminal as he was charged with all our ſins; the croſs, to which thou didſt deliver him; the power, that thou didſt diſplay in raiſing him from the tomb conqueror over death and hell; all theſe myſteries were deſigned for the ſalvation of thoſe believers, whom the devotion of this day hath aſſembled in this ſacred place. Save them, O Lord! *God of peace! who didſt bring again from* Deut. xxxii. 4. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

SERM. VII. *from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make them perfect in every good work to do thy will; work in them that, which is well-pleaſing in thy ſight through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us. This is our text. Almoſt every expreſſion in it is equivocal: but its ambiguity does not diminiſh its beauty. Every path of explication is ſtrewed with flowers, and we meet with only great and intereſting objects, even conformable to the myſteries of this day, and to the ceremony, that aſſembles us in this holy place. If there be a paſſage, in the explication of which we have ever felt an inclination to adopt that maxim, which hath been productive of ſo many bad comments, that is, that expoſitors ought to give to every paſſage of ſcripture all the different ſenſes, which it will bear, it is this paſſage, which we have choſen for our text. Judge of it yourſelves.

There is an ambiguity in the *principal ſubject*, of which our apoſtle ſpeaks, *The love of Chriſt.* This phraſe may ſignify either the love of Chriſt to us, or our love to him.

There is an ambiguity in the *perſons*, who are animated with this love. *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*; S. Paul means either the *miniſters* of the Goſpel, of whom he ſpeaks in the preceding and following verſes; or *all believers*, to the inſtruction of whom he conſecrated all his writings.

There is alſo an ambiguity in the *effects*, which the apoſtle attributes to this love. He ſays, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, the love of Chriſt *uniteth*, or *preſſeth* us. *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, may either ſignify, our love to Jeſus Chriſt uniteth us to one another, bècauſe it collects and unites all our deſires in one point, that is, in Jeſus Chriſt the centre. In this
Col. iii. 14. ſenſe S. Paul ſays, *Love is the bond of perfectneſs*, that is to ſay, the moſt perfect friendſhips, that can be formed,

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are thoſe, which have love for their principle. Thus if my text were rendered *love uniteth us together*, it would expreſs a ſentiment very conformable to the ſcope of S. Paul in this epiſtle. He propoſeth in this epiſtle in general, and in this chapter in particular, to diſcourage thoſe ſcandalous diviſions, which tore out the vitals of the church at Corinth, where party was againſt party, congregation againſt congregation, and paſtor againſt paſtor. SERM. VII.

The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us may alſo ſignify, the love of Chriſt *tranſporteth us*, and carries us, as it were, out of ourſelves. In this caſe, the apoſtle muſt be ſuppoſed to allude to thoſe inſpirations, which the pagan prieſts pretended to receive from their gods, with which, they ſaid, they were filled, and to thoſe, with which the prophets of the true God were really animated. The original word is uſed in this ſenſe in Acts, where it is ſaid, *Paul was preſſed in ſpirit, and teſtified to the Jews, that Jeſus was Chriſt.* This explication approaches ſtill nearer to the ſcope of S. Paul, and to the circumſtances of the apoſtles. They had ecſtacies. S. Peter in the city of Joppa was *in an ecſtacy.* S. Paul alſo was *caught up to the third heaven*, not knowing *whether he was in the body, or out of the body.* Theſe ecſtacies, theſe tranſports, theſe cloſe communions with God, with which the inſpired men were honoured, made them ſometimes paſs for idiots. This is the ſenſe, which ſome give to theſe words, *We are fools for Chriſt's-ſake.* This meaning of our text well comports with the words, which immediately precede, *Whether we be beſides ourſelves, it is to God: or whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe*; that is to ſay, If we be ſometimes at ſuch an immenſe diſtance from all ſenſible objects, if our minds be ſometimes ſo abſent from all the things, that occupy and agitate the minds of other men, that we ſeem to be entirely *beſides ourſelves*, it is becauſe we are all concentred in God; it is becauſe our capacity, all abſorbed in this great object, cannot attend Col. xviii. 5. Acts x. 10. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. 1 Cor. iv. 10.

SERM. VII. attend to any thing, that is not divine, or which doth not proceed immediately from God.

The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us. This expreſſion may mean, ... (my brethren, it is not my uſual method to fill my ſermons with an enumeration of the different ſenſes, that interpreters have given of paſſages of ſcripture: but all theſe explications, which I repeat, and with which perhaps I may overcharge my diſcourſe to day, appear to me ſo juſt and beautiful, that I cannot reconcile myſelf to the paſſing of them over in ſilence. When I adopt one, I ſeem to myſelf to regret the loſs of another.) This, I ſay, may alſo ſignify, that the love of Jeſus Chriſt to us *ſurrounds us on every ſide*; or that our love to him *pervades*, and *poſſeſſes* all the powers of our ſouls.

Luke xix. 43. The firſt ſenſe of the original term is found in this ſaying of Jeſus Chriſt concerning Jeruſalem, *The days ſhall come upon thee, that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide.* The latter is a ſtill more beautiful ſenſe of the term, and perfectly agrees with the preceding words, already quoted, *If we be beſides ourſelves, it is to God.* A prevalent paſſion deprives us at times of the liberty of reaſoning juſtly, and of converſing accurately. Some take theſe famous words of S. Paul in this ſenſe, Rom. ix. 3. *I could wiſh myſelf accurſed from Chriſt for my brethren*; and theſe of Moſes, Exod. xxxii. 32. *Forgive their ſin, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book.* Not that a believer in Chriſt can ever coolly conſent to be ſeparated from Chriſt, or blotted out of the catalogue of thoſe happy ſouls, for whom God reſerves eternal happineſs: but theſe expreſſions flow from *tranſports of love* in holy men. They were *beſides themſelves*, tranſported beyond their judgment. It is the ſtate of a ſoul occupied with one great intereſt, animated with only one great paſſion.

Finally, theſe words alſo are equivocal, *If one died for all*, that is to ſay, if Jeſus Chriſt hath ſatisfied divine juſtice by his death for all men, then, all they, who

who have recourſe to it, are accounted to have ſatisfied it in his perſon. Or rather, *If one died for all*, if no man can arrive at ſalvation but by the grace, which the death of Chriſt obtained for him, *then are all dead*, then all ought to take his death for a model by dying their ſelves to ſin. Agreeably to this idea, S. Paul ſays, *We are buried with him by baptiſm into death*, that is, the ceremony of wholly immerſing us in water, when we were baptized, ſignified, that we died to ſin, and that of raiſing us again from our immerſion ſignified, that we would no more return to thoſe diſorderly practices, in which we lived before our converſion to chriſtianity. *Knowing this*, adds our apoſtle, *in that Chriſt died, he died unto ſin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.* Thus in my text, *If one died for all, then were all dead*, that is, agreeably to the following words, *He died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves: but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.*

SERM VII.

Rom. vi. 4.

10.

Such is the diverſity of interpretations, of which the words of my text are ſuſceptible. Nothing can be farther from my deſign, nothing would leſs comport with the holineſs of this day, than to put each of theſe in an even balance, and to examine with ſcrupuloſity which merited the preference. I would wiſh to unite them all, as far as it is practicable, and as far as the time allotted for this exerciſe will allow. They, who have written on eloquence, ſhould have remarked one figure of ſpeech, which, I think, has not been obſerved, I mean, *a ſublime ambiguity*. I underſtand by this, the artifice of a man, who, not being able to expreſs his rich ideas by ſimple terms, of determinate meaning, makes uſe of others, which excite a multitude of ideas; like thoſe war-machines, that ſtrike ſeveral ways at once. I could ſhew you many examples of theſe traits of eloquence in both ſacred and profane writers: but ſuch diſcuſſions would be improper here.

In general, we are fully perſuaded, that the deſign of S. Paul in my text is to expreſs the power of thoſe im-

SERM. VII. impreſſions, which the love of Jeſus Chriſt to mankind makes on the hearts of real chriſtians. This is an idea, that reigns in all the writings of this apoſtle; and it eſpecially prevails in this epiſtle, from which our text is taken. Chap. iii. 18. *We all, with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from* iv. 10. *glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord. Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jeſus, that the life alſo of Jeſus might be made manifeſt in our body.* 16. *Though our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. Our light affliction, which is but for* 17, 18. *a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for the things which are ſeen are temporal; but the things which* v. 5. *are not ſeen are eternal. He, that hath wrought us for the ſelf ſame thing, is God, who alſo hath given unto us the* 8. *earneſt of the ſpirit. We are willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord.* Again in the text, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him which died for them, and roſe again.* This is the language of a ſoul, on which the love of Chriſt makes lively and deep impreſſions.

Let us follow this idea, and, in order to unite, as far as an union is practicable, all the different explications, that I have mentioned, let us conſider theſe impreſſions.

I. In regard to the vehement deſires and ſentiments that they excite in our hearts. *This love conſtraineth*, it poſſeſſeth, it tranſporteth us.

II. In regard to the ſeveral recipients of it. *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, us believers, and particularly us miniſters of the Goſpel, who are heralds of the love of God.

III. In regard to the conſolations, which are experienced through the influence of love in the miſeries of

of life, and in the agonies of death, of which the apoſtle ſpeaks in the preceding verſes. SERM. VII.

IV. In regard to the univerſality of that devotedneſs, with which theſe ſentiments inſpire us to this Jeſus, who hath loved us in a manner ſo tender. *He died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.*

After we have conſidered theſe ideas ſeparately, I will endeavour to unite them all together, and apply them to the myſtery of this day. God grant, when ye come to the table of Jeſus Chriſt, when ye receive from our hands the bread and the wine, the ſymbols of his love, when in his name we ſay to you, *This is my body, this is my blood*; ye may anſwer, from the bottom of a ſoul penetrated with this love, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.*

I. Let us conſider the impreſſions of the love of Chriſt on us in regard to *the vehemence of thoſe deſires, and the vivacity of thoſe ſentiments, which are excited by it in the ſoul of a real chriſtian.* I am well aware that lively ſentiments, and vehement deſires, ſeem entirely chimerical to ſome people. There are many perſons, who imagine, that the degree, to which they have carried piety, is the higheſt, that can be attained; that there is no going beyond it; and that all higher pretenſions are unſubſtantial, and enthuſiaſtical. Agreeably to this notion, they think it right to ſtrike out of the liſt of real virtues as many as their preachers recommend of this kind, although they ſeem celebrated in ſcripture, and beautifully exemplified in the lives of the holy men of old. I am ſpeaking now of zeal and fervour. This pretence, all extravagant as it is, ſeems to be founded on reaſon, and has I know not what of the ſerious and grave in its extravagance. It is impoſſible,

SERM. VII. ſible, ſay they, that abſtract truths ſhould make the ſame impreſſions, on men compoſed of fleſh and blood, as ſenſible objects do. Now all is abſtract in religion. An inviſible redeemer, inviſible aſſiſtance, an inviſible judge, inviſible puniſhments, inviſible rewards.

Were the people, whom I oppoſe, to attribute their coldneſs and indifference to their own frailty; were they endeavouring to correct it; were they ſucceeding in attempts to free themſelves from it; we would not reply to their pretence: but, when they are ſyſtematically cold and indolent; when, not content with a paſſive obedience to theſe deplorable diſpoſitions, they refuſe to grant the miniſters of the Goſpel the liberty of attacking them; when they pretend that we ſhould meditate on the doctrines of redemption and on a geometrical calculation with equal coolneſs; that theſe words, *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to ſave it*, ſhould be pronounced with the ſame indolence as theſe, *The whole is greater than a part*; this is the height of injuſtice. We are not obliged, we think, to reaſon with people of this kind, and while they remain deſtitute of that faculty, without which they cannot enter into thoſe demonſtrations, which we could produce on this article, it would be in vain to pretend to convince them.

After all, we glory in being treated by perſons of this kind in the ſame manner, in which they would have treated ſaints of the higheſt order, thoſe eminent pietiſts, who felt the fine emotions, that they ſtyle enthuſiaſm and fanaticiſm. What impreſſions of religion had Moſes, David, Elias, and many other ſaints, a liſt of whom we have not time to produce? Were the ſentiments of thoſe men cold, who uttered their emotions in ſuch language as this? *O Lord! I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory. O Lord! forgive their ſin, or blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book. I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hoſts. The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord*

Exod. xxxiii. 18. xxxii. 32. 1 Kings xix. 10. Pſal. lxix. 6.

of

of hoſts! My heart and my fleſh cry out for the living God. SERM.
When ſhall I come, and appear before God? Before thine VII.
altars, O Lord of hoſts, my king, and my God! As the Pſ. lxxxiv.
hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul 1, 2, 3, xlii. 1, 2.
after thee, O God! My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God! Love is ſtrong as death. Jealouſy is cruel as the grave. The coals thereof are coals of fire. Many waters Cant. viii.
cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. 6, 7.

If religion hath produced ſuch lively ſentiments, ſuch vehement deſires in the hearts of thoſe believers, who ſaw in a very imperfect manner the objects, that are moſt capable of producing them, I mean the croſs, and all its myſteries, what emotions ought not to be excited in us, who behold them in a light ſo clear?

Ah ſinner! thou miſerable victim of death and hell, recollect the means, that grace hath employed to deliver thee! raiſed from the bottom of a black abyſs, contemplate the love that brought thee up, behold, ſtretch thy ſoul, and meaſure the dimenſions of it. Repreſent to thyſelf the Son of God enjoying in the boſom of his Father ineffable delights, his ſelf being the object of his adorable Father's love. Behold the Son of God caſting his eyes on this earth, touched with a ſight of the miſeries, into which ſin had plunged the wretched poſterity of Adam; forming from all eternity the generous deſign of ſuffering in thy ſtead, and executing his purpoſe in the fulneſs of time. See him, whom angels adore, uniting himſelf to mortal fleſh in the virgin's womb, wrapped in ſwadling clothes, and lying in a manger at Bethlehem. Repreſent to thyſelf Jeſus ſuffering the juſt diſpleaſure of God in the garden of Gethſemane; ſinking under the weight of thy ſins, with which he was charged; crying in the extremity of his pain, *O my Father! if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me!* See Jeſus paſſing over the brook Cedron, carrying to Calvary his croſs, execrated by an unbridled populace, faſtened to the infamous inſtrument of his puniſhment, crowned with thorns, and rent aſunder

with

SERM. VII. with nails; loſing ſight for a while of the love of his Father, which conſtituted all his peace and joy; bowing under the laſt ſtroke, and uttering theſe tragical words, which ought to make all ſinners ſhed tears of blood, *My God! my God! why haſt thou forſaken me?* Ah! philoſophical gravity! cool reaſoning! how miſemployed are ye in meditating theſe deep myſteries!

Pſ. xxxvi. 7. lxiii. 5, 6. *How excellent is thy loving-kindneſs, O God! My ſoul ſhall be ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs, when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.*

Rom. v. 5. *The love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghoſt which is given unto us.*

Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt: nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me; and the life, which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me. He, that hath wrought us for the ſelf ſame thing is God, who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of his ſpirit. The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.* This is the language of a heart inflamed with an idea of the love of Chriſt.

II. Let us conſider the impreſſions of the love of Jeſus Chriſt in regard to *the different receivers of it. The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, us,* that is to ſay *us believers,* whatever rank we occupy in the church: but in a particular manner *us apoſtles* of the Lord. I have already intimated, that my text may be conſidered as an explication of what related to the apoſtles in the foregoing verſes. What idea had S. Paul given of apoſtleſhip in the preceding verſes? He had repreſented theſe holy men as all taken up with the duties of their office; as ſurmounting the greateſt obſtacles; as triumphing over the moſt violent conflicts in the diſcharge of their function; as acquitting themſelves with a rectitude of conſcience capable of ſuſtaining the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny of men, yea of God himſelf; as deeply ſenſible of the honour, that God had put upon them, by calling them to ſuch a work; as devoting all their labours, all their diligence, and all their time to the

ſalvation

ſalvation of the ſouls of men. We muſt repeat all the foregoing chapters, were we to confirm theſe obſervations by the apoſtle's own words. In theſe chapters we meet with the following expreſſions. *Our rejoicing is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience.* i. 12. *Thanks be unto God, which always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place.* ii. 14. *We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of ſincerity, but as of God, in the ſight of God ſpeak we in Chriſt.* 17. *If the miniſtration of death, written and engraven in ſtones, was glorious, ſo that the children of Iſrael could not ſtedfaſtly behold the face of Moſes, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away; how ſhall not the miniſtration of the ſpirit be rather glorious?* iii. 7. *All things are for your ſakes, that abundant grace might redound to the glory of God.* iv. 15. To the ſame purpoſe are the words immediately preceding the text. *Whether we be beſides ourſelves, it is to God: or whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe.* What cauſe produced all theſe noble effects? What object animated S. Paul, and the other apoſtles, to fill up the noble character, which they bore, in a manner ſo glorious? S. Paul tells you in the text, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*; that is to ſay, the love of Jeſus Chriſt to his church makes ſuch deep and lively impreſſions on our hearts, that we can never loſe ſight of it. We think we can never take too much pains for the good of a ſociety, which Jeſus Chriſt ſo tenderly loves. We are ſo filled with gratitude for his condeſcenſion, firſt for incorporating us in this auguſt body, and next for ſubſtituting us to act in his place, that we rejoice in every opportunity of ſacrificing all to expreſs our ſenſe of it.

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Theſe are the true ſentiments of a miniſter of the Goſpel. When I ſpeak of a miniſter of the Goſpel, I do not mean a miniſter by trade and profeſſion only, I mean a miniſter by inclination and affection. For, my brethren, there are two ſorts of miniſters, the one I may juſtly denominate trading miniſters, the other

SERM. VII. affectionate miniſters. A trading miniſter, who conſiders the functions of his miniſtry in temporal views only; who ſtudies the evidences and doctrines of religion, not to confirm himſelf, but to convince others; who puts on the exterior of piety, but is deſtitute of the ſentiments of it; is a character ſordid and baſe, I had almoſt ſaid, odious and execrable. What character can be more odious and execrable, than that of a man, who gives evidence of a truth, which he his ſelf does not believe? Who excites the moſt lively emotions in an auditory, while he his ſelf is leſs affected than any of his hearers? But there is alſo a miniſter by inclination and affection, who ſtudies the truths of religion, becauſe they preſent to him the moſt ſublime objects, that a reaſonable creature can contemplate; and who ſpeaks with eagerneſs and vehemence on theſe truths, becauſe, he perceives, they only are worthy of governing intelligent beings.

What effects does a meditation of the love of God in Chriſt produce on the heart of ſuch a miniſter? S. Paul mentions the effects in the text, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth, ſurroundeth, preſſeth, tranſporteth him.* My brethren, pardon me, if I ſay, the greateſt part of you are not capable of entering into theſe reflections; for, as ye conſider the greateſt myſteries of the Goſpel only in a vague and ſuperficial manner, ye neither know the ſolidity nor the beauty of them, ye neither perceive the foundation, the connection, nor the glory of them. Hence it is, that your minds are unhappy when they attend long to theſe ſubjects, reading tires you, meditation fatigues you, a diſcourſe of an hour wears out all your patience, the languor of your deſires anſwers to the nature of your applications, and your ſacrifices to religion correſpond to the faintneſs of thoſe deſires, and to the dulneſs of thoſe applications, which produced them. It was not thus with S. Paul, nor is it thus with ſuch a miniſter of the Goſpel, as I have deſcribed. As he meditates he learns; as he learns,

learns, his desire of knowing increaseth. He sees the whole chain of wonders, that God hath wrought for the salvation of men; he admires to see a promise made to Adam renewed to Abraham; he is astonished to find a promise renewed to Abraham confirmed to Moses; he rejoices to see a promise confirmed to Moses published by the prophets, and long after that publication accomplished by Jesus Christ. Charmed with all these beauties, he thinks it felicity to enter into the views and the functions of Jesus Christ, and to become *a worker together with him*; this work engrosses all his thoughts; he lives only to advance it; he sacrificeth all to this great design, he is *besides himself*. Why? *The love of Christ constraineth him.* SERM. VII. 2 Cor. vi. 1.

III. Let us add a few considerations on the impressions of the love of Jesus Christ in regard to *the consolations, which they afford in the miseries of life, and in the agonies of death.*

By what unheard of secret does the christian surmount pain? By what unheard of secret does he find pleasure in the idea of death? S. Paul informs us in the text. *The love of Christ possesseth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. If one died for all, then were all dead*, this is the source of the consolations of a dying man, this is the only rational system, that men have opposed against the fears of death. All beside are vain and feeble, not to say stupid and absurd.

What can be more improper to support us under the fear of death than the presumptions, the uncertainties, the tremulous hopes of a Socrates, or a Seneca, or other pagan philosophers?

What can be less likely to arm us against the fear of death than distant consequences drawn from confused notions of the nature of the soul, such as natural religion affords? What can be more weak than vague speculations on the benevolence of the supreme Being?

SERM. VII. Can any thing be more extravagant, can any thing be leſs capable of ſupporting us under the fear of death, than that art, which worldlings uſe, of avoiding the ſight of it, and of ſtupifying the ſoul in tumult and noiſe?

Let us not aſſume a brutal courage; let us not affect an intrepidity, which we are incapable of maintaining, and which will deceive us, when the enemy comes. Poor mortal! victim of death and hell! do not ſay, *I am increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing*, while every voice around thee cries, *Thou art poor and miſerable, blind and naked.* Let us acknowledge our miſeries. Every thing in dying terrifies me.

Rev. iii. 17.

The *pains* that precede it, terrify me. I ſhudder, when I ſee a miſerable creature burning with a fever, ſuffocated, tormented, enduring more on a death-bed than a criminal ſuffers on a ſcaffold or a wheel. When I ſee this, I ſay to myſelf, This is the ſtate, into which I muſt ſhortly come.

The *ſacrifices*, to which death calls us, terrify me. I am not able, without rending my ſoul with inſufferable grief, I am not able to look at the diſmal vail, that is about to cover every object of my delight. Ah! how can I bear to contemplate myſelf diſſolving my ſtrongeſt bonds, leaving my neareſt relations, quitting, for ever quitting, my moſt tender friends, and tearing myſelf from my own family!

The *ſtate*, into which death brings my *body*, terrifies me. I cannot without horror figure to myſelf my funeral, my coffin, my grave, my organs, to which my creator hath ſo cloſely united my ſoul, cold and motionleſs, without feeling and life.

Above all, *the idea of a juſt tribunal*, before which death will place me, terrifies me. My hair ſtarts and ſtiffens on my head, my blood freezes in my veins, my thoughts tremble and claſh, my knees ſmite together, when I reflect on theſe words of S. Paul juſt before my text,

text, *We muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* SERM. VII. Ver. 10. Miſerable I! I, who have ſo often ſinned againſt my own light; I, who have ſo often forgotten my Creator; I, who have ſo often been a ſcourge to my neighbour; ſo often a ſcandal to the church; Wretched I! I muſt *appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, to receive the things done in my body, whether they be good or bad!* What an idea! What a terrible, what a deſperate idea!

The impreſſions, which an idea of the love of Chriſt makes upon my ſoul, efface thoſe, that an idea of death had produced there. *The love of Chriſt* conſoles my ſoul and diſſipates all my fears. *If one died for all, then were all dead*, is a ſhort ſyſtem againſt the fears of death.

Jeſus Chriſt died for all. The *pains* of death terrify me no more. When I compare what Jeſus Chriſt appoints me to ſuffer with what he ſuffered for me, my pains vaniſh, and ſeem nothing to me. Beſide, how can I doubt, whether he, who had ſo much love as to die for me, will ſupport me under the pains of death? Having been *tried in all points like as we are*, will he not be *touched with a feeling of my infirmities*, and deliver me, when I am tried, as he was. Heb. iv. 15.

Jeſus Chriſt died for all. The *ſacrifices*, that death requires of me, terrify me no more. I am fully perſuaded, God will indemnify me for all, that death takes from me, and he, who gave me his own Son, *will with him alſo freely give me all things.* Rom. viii. 32.

Jeſus Chriſt died for all. The *ſtate*, to which death reduces my *body*, terrifies me no more. Jeſus Chriſt hath ſanctified my grave, and his reſurrection is a pledge of mine.

Jeſus Chriſt died for all. The *tribunal* before which death places me, hath nothing in it to terrify me. Jeſus Chriſt hath ſilenced it. The blows of divine juſtice

SERM. VII. juſtice fell on his head, and he is the guardian of mine. Thus *the love of Chriſt preſſeth, covereth, and ſurroundeth us, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.*

IV. The impreſſions of the love of Chriſt on us are conſiderable, in regard to that *univerſal obedience*, with which the tender love of a redeemer inſpires us. This is the meaning of theſe words, *he died for all, that they which live ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.* Of the characters, the motives, the pleaſures, of this univerſal obedience, ye cannot be ignorant, my brethren. They make the chief matter of all the diſcourſes, that are addreſſed to you; and they have been particularly the topics for ſome weeks paſt, while we were going over the hiſtory of the paſſion of Chriſt, a hiſtory, that may be truly called, a narration of Chriſt's love to you. I will, therefore, confine myſelf to one reflection.

I make this reflection, in order to prevent miſtakes on this diſpoſition of mind, of which my text ſpeaks. Let us not imagine, that S. Paul, by exhorting us to live only to Chriſt, intends to diſſuade us from living for the benefit of our fellow-creatures. On the contrary, I have already recommended that ſenſe of the words, which ſome commentators give; *the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, that is, ſay ſome, *the love of Chriſt unites us in bonds of love to one another*; and I have already ſhewn, that, if this could not be proved to be the preciſe meaning of S. Paul in the text, it is, however, a very juſt notion in itſelf, and a doctrine taught by the apoſtle in expreſs words in other places. But what I have not yet remarked is this. In the opinion of ſome interpreters there is a cloſe connection between the words of my text, *the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, and the preceding words, *whether we be beſides ourſelves, it is to God; or whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe.* According to this notion, S. Paul, having deſcribed the

two

two parts of devotion, or, if ye will, the two kinds of christian devotion, unites both in this general expreſſion, *Live unto Chriſt.* The one is the devotion of the cloſet, the other that of ſociety. Cloſet devotion is expreſſed in the words, *whether we be beſides ourſelves, it is to God.* This is expreſſive of the effuſions of a ſoul, who, having excluded the world, and being alone with his God, unfolds a heart penetrated with love to him. *Whether we be ſober, it is for your cauſe, for the love of Chriſt uniteth us,* ſignifies the ſtate of a ſoul, who, having quitted the cloſet, having returned to his natural courſe of thought, and having entered into the ſociety, in which God has appointed him to live, makes the happineſs of his neighbour his principal occupation.

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I ſay of this interpretation, as I ſaid of a former, I am not ſure, that it contains preciſely the meaning of S. Paul in the text: but it contains an idea very juſt in itſelf, and which the Apoſtle, as well as all other inſpired writers, has expreſſed elſewhere. Would ye then perform this neceſſary duty, agreably to this ſenſe of the text? Would they, *who live, not live to themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again?* Let your devotion have two parts. Let your life be divided into two ſorts of devotion, the devotion of the cloſet, and the devotion of ſociety.

Practiſe private devotion, be *beſides yourſelves unto God.* Believer! Is it right for thee to indemnify thyſelf by an immediate communion with thy God for the violence, that is done to thine affection, when thou art obliged, either wholly to loſe ſight of him, or to ſee him only through mediums, which conceal a part of his beauty? Well then, enter into thy cloſet, ſhut thy door againſt the world, flee from ſociety, and forget it, give thyſelf up to the delights, which holy ſouls feel, when they abſorb themſelves in God. Beſeech him, after the example of inſpired men in their private interviews with him, to manifeſt himſelf to you in a more intimate

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intimate manner. Say to him as they ſaid; *O Lord, I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory. It is good for me to draw near to God. Whom have I in heaven but thee? there is none upon earth, that I deſire beſides thee.*

Exod. xxxiii. 18. Pſal. lxxiii. 28. 25.

But, after thou haſt performed the devotion of the cloſet, practiſe the devotion of ſociety. After thou haſt been *beſides thyſelf to God*, be *ſober* to thy neighbour. Let *love unite thee* to the reſt of mankind. Viſit the priſoner; relieve the ſick; guide the doubtful; aſſiſt him, who ſtands in need of your credit. Diſtruſt a piety, that is not ingenious at rendering thee uſeful to ſociety. S. Paul ſomewhere ſays, *All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* This propoſition ſeems hyperbolical. Some expoſitors have thought it juſtifiable, by ſuppoſing, that the apoſtle ſpeaks here only of the ſecond table of the law. Their ſuppoſition is unneceſſary. In ſome reſpects all virtues are compriſed in this command, *thou ſhalt love thy neighbour.* To *love* our neighbour, we muſt be *humble.* When we have lofty notions of ourſelves, it is impoſſible to pay that attention to a neighbour, which his intereſt demands. To *love* our neighbour, we muſt be *patient.* When the firſt obſtacle diſcourages us, or when the leaſt oppoſition inflames our tempers; it is impoſſible to enter into thoſe details, which love for a neighbour requires. In order to diſcharge the duty of *loving* a neighbour, we muſt be *moderate in our pleaſures.* When we are devoted to pleaſure, it is impoſſible to endure thoſe diſagreables, which love to a neighbour demands. Above all, to *love a neighbour*, we muſt *love God.* Remember the

1 John iv. 20.

ſaying of S. John, *If a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* For what is love? Is it not that ſympathy, which forms between two intelligent beings a conformity of ideas and ſentiment? And now can we flatter ourſelves, that we have a conformity of ideas with a God of love, who hath communicated to his creatures a conformity of ſentiments and ideas, if we

we withhold our affection from his creatures, and live only to ourſelves? *He*, then, *who ſaith, I love God, and hateth his brother, is a liar.* If thou doſt not love him, thou art, (permit me to ſay it,) thou art a viſionary, a fanatic. SERM. VII.

Who is a viſionary? who is a fanatic? He is a man, who creates fanciful ideas of God. He is a man, who frames an arbitrary morality. He is a man, who, under pretence of living to God, forgets what he owes to his fellow-creatures. And this is exactly the character of the man, whoſe cloſet devotion makes him neglect ſocial religion. Ah! hadſt thou juſt notions of God, thou wouldſt know, that *God is love*; and hadſt thou juſt notions of morality, thou wouldſt know, that it is impoſſible for God, who is love, to preſcribe any other love to us, than that which is the eſſence of all moral duties.

All theſe ideas, my brethren! would require much enlargement: but time fails. I ſhall not ſcruple ſo much the cloſing of this ſubject to day, without conſidering it in every point of view, as I ſhould do in our ordinary exerciſes. I deſcend from this pulpit to conduct you to the table of the Lord, on which lie the ſymbols of that love, of which we have been ſpeaking, and they will exhort you in language more forcible than mine to reduce all the doctrine of this day to practice.

We have been preaching to you fervour, zeal, tranſports of divine love; attend to thoſe ſymbols, they preach theſe virtues to you in words more powerful than ours. Say to yourſelves, when ye approach the holy table: It was on the evening, that preceded the terrible day of my redeemer's infinite ſufferings, that he appointed this commemorative ſupper. This bread is a memorial of his body, which was bruiſed for my ſins on the croſs. The wine is a memorial of that blood, which ſo plentifully flowed from his wounds to ranſom me from my ſins. In remembering this

SERM. VII. love, is there any ice, that will not thaw? Is there any marble, that will not break? will not love the moſt vehement animate and inflame you?

We have been preaching, that the love of Jeſus Chriſt ought to animate you. Hear the voice of theſe ſymbols, they preach this truth to you in language more powerful than ours. There is not to day among you an old man ſo infirm; nor a poor man ſo mean; nor a citizen ſo unknown to his fellow-citizens, that he may not approach the holy table, and receive from ſovereign wiſdom the myſterious repaſt.

But, miniſters of the goſpel, we have been ſaying, ought more than other men to be animated with the love of Chriſt. My dear colleagues in the work of the Lord, hear theſe ſymbols; they preach to you in language more powerful than ours. What a glory hath God put upon us in chooſing to commit to us ſuch a miniſtry of reconciliation! What an honour to be called to preach ſuch a goſpel! What an honour to be appointed diſpenſers of theſe rich favours, which God to day beſtows on this aſſembly! But, at the ſame time, what love ought the love of God to us to excite in our hearts? The heart of a miniſter of the goſpel ſhould be an altar, on which divine fire ſhould burn with unquenchable flame.

We have been preaching to you, that the love of Chriſt will become to you an inexhauſtible ſource of conſolation in the diſtreſſes of life, and in the agonies of death. Hear theſe ſymbols; they preach theſe truths to you in language more forcible than ours. Hear them; they ſay to you in the name of God, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob! When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt.*

Iſai. xli. 14.

We have been preaching to you an univerſal obedience to the will of God. Hear theſe ſymbols; they preach this truth to you in language more forcible than

than ours. And what exception would ye make in your obedience to a Saviour, who does for you what ye are going to ſee, to hear, and to experience? What can ye refuſe to a Saviour, who gave you his blood and his life; to a Saviour, who, on his throne, where he is receiving the adorations of Angels and Seraphims, thinks of your bodies, your ſouls, your ſalvation; who ſtill wiſhes to hold the moſt tender and intimate communion with you? SERM. VII.

My dear brethren! I hope, ſo many exhortations will not be addreſſed to you in vain. I hope, we ſhall not be miniſters of vengeance among you to day. Ye are not going, I truſt, by receiving ſacramental bread and wine at our hands to day, to eat and drink your own condemnation. I hope, the windows of heaven will be opened to day, and benedictious from above poured out on this aſſembly. The angels, I truſt, are waiting to rejoice in your converſion. May Jeſus Chriſt teſtify his approbation of your love to him by ſhedding abroad rich effuſions of his love among you! May this communion be remembered with pleaſure, when ye come to die, and may the pleaſing recollection of it felicitate you through all eternity! O thou *mighty one of Iſrael!* O Jeſus, our hope, and joy, hear and ratify our prayers! Amen. To him, as to the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

The LIFE of FAITH.

SERMON VIII.

The LIFE of FAITH.

HABAKKUK ii. 4.

The juſt ſhall live by his Faith.

THE words of our text, which open to us a wide field of reflections, may be taken in two ſenſes. The firſt may be called a moral ſenſe, and the laſt a theological ſenſe. The firſt regards the circumſtances of the Jews, when the prophet Habakkuk delivered this prophecy; and the laſt reſpects that great object, on which believers have fixed their eyes in all ages of the church.

Habakkuk, (for I enter into the matter immediately, in order to have full time to diſcuſs the ſubject.) began to prophecy before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, and he was raiſed up to announce the progreſs of that ſcourge, or, as another prophet calls him, that *hammer of the whole earth.* Habakkuk, aſtoniſhed, and, in a manner, offended at his own predictions, derives ſtrength from the attributes of God to ſupport himſelf under this trial, and expreſſeth himſelf in this manner; *Art thou not from everlaſting, O Lord my God, mine holy one? We ſhall not die, O Lord! thou haſt ordained them for judgment, and, O Mighty God! thou haſt eſtabliſhed them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.*

Jer. l. 23.

Hab. i. 12. 13.

The prophet goes farther. Not content with vague ideas on a ſubject ſo intereſting, he intreats God to give him ſome particular knowledge by revelation of the deſtiny

SERM. VIII. deſtiny of a tyrant, who boaſted of inſulting God, pillaging his temple, and carrying his people into captivity: *I will ſtand upon my watch, and ſet me upon the tower, and will watch to ſee what he will ſay unto me.* The Rabbies give a very ſingular expoſition of the words, *I will ſtand upon my watch*, and they tranſlate them, *I will confine myſelf in a circle.* The prophet, ſay they, drew a circle, and made a ſolemn vow, that he would not go out of it, till God had unfolded thoſe dark diſpenſations to him, which ſeemed ſo injurious to his perfections. This was almoſt like the famous conſul, who being ſent by the Roman ſenate to Antiochus, made a circle round that prince, and ſaid to him, Either you ſhall accept the conditions of peace, that I offer to you, before you go out of this circle, or in the name of the Senate I will declare war againſt you *.

God yielded to the deſire of his ſervant; he informed him of the dreadful viciſſitudes, which Nebuchadnezzar ſhould experience; and of the return of the Jews into their own country: but at the ſame time he aſſured him, that theſe events were at a conſiderable diſtance, that no man could rejoice in them except he looked forward into futurity, but that faith in the accompliſhment of theſe promiſed bleſſings would ſupport believers under that deluge of calamities, which was coming on the church. *The viſion is yet for an appointed time. At the end it ſhall ſpeak and ſhall not lie.* If the Lord ſeem to you to defer the accompliſhment of his promiſes too long, *wait for it* with all that deference, which finite creatures owe to the ſupreme Intelligence, that governs the world. He, you will find, *will not tarry* beyond his appointed time. *The ſoul, which is lifted up*, that is to ſay, the man, who would fix a time for God to cruſh tyrants, *is not upright*, but wanders after his own ſpeculations: *but the juſt ſhall live by his faith.*

This

* M. Popilius Læna a Antiochus Epiphanes dans Velleï Paterc. Hiſt. Rom. l. i.

This is what I call the moral ſenſe of the text, relative to the peculiar circumſtances of the Jews in the time of the prophet, and in this ſenſe S. Paul applies my text to the circumſtances of the Hebrews, who were called to endure many afflictions in this life, and to defer the enjoyment of their reward till the next. SERM. VIII.

Ye have need of patience, ſays the apoſtle, *that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promiſe. For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the juſt ſhall live by faith.* Heb. x. 36, 37, 48.

But theſe words have alſo a theological meaning, which regards thoſe great objects, on which believers have fixed their eyes in all ages of the church. This is the ſenſe, which S. Paul gives the words in his epiſtle to the Romans. *The righteouſneſs of God is revealed in the Goſpel from faith to faith: as it is written, The juſt ſhall live by faith.* In the ſame ſenſe he uſes the paſſage in the Epiſtle to the Galatians, *That no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God is evident; for the juſt ſhall live by faith.* In this ſenſe I intend to conſider the text now, and to apply all the time allotted for this diſcourſe to this view of it. i. 17. iii. 11.

In order to develop the ſubject, I will do three things.

I. I will explain the terms of this propoſition, *the juſt ſhall live by faith.*

II. I will prove the truth of it.

III. I will endeavour to remove the difficulties, which may attend the ſubject to ſome of you.

I. Let us explain the terms of this propoſition, *the juſt ſhall live by his faith.* In order to underſtand the ſubject, we muſt enquire who is the *juſt*, what is the *life*, and what the *faith*, of which the prophet, or rather S. Paul after the prophet, ſpeaks.

Who is this *juſt*, or righteous man? To form a clear notion of this, it is neceſſary with S. Paul, to diſtinguiſh two ſorts of righteouſneſs, a righteouſneſs according to the law, and a righteouſneſs according to faith.

SERM. VIII. By righteouſneſs after the law I underſtand that, which man wiſhes to derive from his own perſonal ability. By righteouſneſs of faith I underſtand that, which man derives from a principle foreign from himſelf. A man, who is juſt, or to ſpeak more preciſely, a man, who pretends to be juſt according to this firſt righteouſneſs, conſents to be examined and judged according to the utmoſt rigour of the law. He defies the juſtice of God to diſcover any thing in him, that deſerves puniſhment; and he hath the audacity to put himſelf on ſuch a trial as juſtice pronounceth in theſe words of the law, *If a man do theſe things, he ſhall live in them.* He, on the contrary, who is juſt according to the righteouſneſs of faith, acknowledgeth himſelf guilty of many and great ſins, which deſerve the moſt rigorous puniſhment: but he doth not give himſelf up to that deſpair, into which the idea of his criminality would naturally hurry him; he is not afraid of thoſe puniſhments, which, he owns, he deſerves; he hopes to live, becauſe he expects God will deal with him, not according to what he is in himſelf: but according to his relation to Jeſus Chriſt.

Lev. xviii. 5.

That theſe are the ideas, which muſt be affixed to the term *juſt*, is evident from theſe words of S. Paul; *I count all things but loſs, for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord; for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him*, remark theſe words, *not having mine own righteouſneſs, which is of the law, but that, which is through the faith of Chriſt, the righteouſneſs, which is of God by faith.* This paſſage ſufficiently ſhews the ſenſe, in which the term *juſt* is to be taken, and this term needs no farther elucidation.

Phil. iii. 8, 9.

The ſecond alſo is eaſily explained. The juſt ſhall *live*, that is to ſay, although divine juſtice had condemned him to eternal death, yet he ſhall be freed from it; and although he had rendered himſelf unworthy of eternal felicity, yet he ſhall enjoy it. This is ſo plain, that

that it is needleſs to enlarge on this term. We intend SERM. to inſiſt moſt on that term, which is the moſt dif- VIII. ficult; the third term, *faith*, I mean, *The juſt ſhall live by his faith.*

To have faith, or to believe, is an expreſſion ſo vague in itſelf, and taken in ſo many different ſenſes in Scripture, that we cannot take too much care in determining its preciſe meaning. Faith is ſometimes a diſpoſition common to the righteous and the wicked; ſometimes it is the diſtinguiſhing character of a chriſtian, and of chriſtianity; ſometimes it is put for the virtue of Abraham, who was called the *father of the faithful*, by excellence; and ſometimes it ſtands for the credence of devils, and the terrors, that agitate them in hell, are aſcribed to it. Rom. iv. 11.

The variety of this ſignification ariſes from this conſideration; faith is a diſpoſition of mind, that changeth its nature according to the various objects, which are propoſed to it. If the object preſented to faith be a particular object, faith is a particular diſpoſition; and if the object be general, faith is a general virtue. If we believe a paſt event, we are ſaid to have faith, for *through faith we underſtand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.* If we believe a future event, we are ſaid to have faith, for *faith is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.* When the woman of Canaan believed, that Jeſus Chriſt would grant her petition, ſhe was ſaid to have faith, *O woman, great is thy faith.* In a ſimilar caſe, our Lord ſays, *I have not found ſuch faith in Iſrael.* When the diſciples believed, that they ſhould work miracles in virtue of the name of Jeſus Chriſt, it was called a having of faith, *If ye have faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it ſhall obey you.* In a word, every act of the mind acquieſcing in a revealed truth is called faith in the ſtyle of ſcripture. Heb. xi. 3. Ver. 1. Mat. xv. 28. viii. 10. xvii. 20.

SERM. VIII.

But, among theſe different notions, there is one, which is particular, there is a faith, to which ſcripture aſcribes extraordinary praiſe. Saving faith, the faith, that Jeſus Chriſt requires of all chriſtians, and of which it is ſaid, *through faith are ye ſaved*, and elſewhere, *whoſoever believeth* ſhall have everlaſting life, this is the faith of which the text ſpeaks, and of the nature of which we are now enquiring. To comprehend this, we muſt trace the queſtion to its principle, and examine what is the object of this faith.

Eph. ii. 8. John, iii. 16.

The great and principal object, which is preſented to the faith, that juſtifies, without doubt is Jeſus Chriſt as dying and offering himſelf to the juſtice of his Father. On this account S. Paul ſays to the Corinthians, *I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.* Faith contemplates the objects, that are diſplayed in the croſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and perſuades the chriſtian, that there is no other way of obtaining ſalvation, or, to uſe the language of ſcripture, that *there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.* It inſpires him with a ſincere deſire of lodging under the ſhadow of his croſs, or, to ſpeak in plain ſcripture language without a figure, of being *found in him, not having his own righteouſneſs, which is of the law: but that, which is through the faith of Chriſt.* This is a general vague account of the nature of faith.

1 Eph. ii. 2. Acts, iv. 12.

But as this notion of faith is vague, it is ſubject to all the inconveniences of vague ideas; it is equivocal, and open to illuſion. We are not ſaved by wiſhing to be ſaved; nor are we juſtified becauſe we barely deſire to be juſtified.

We muſt, therefore, diſtinguiſh two ſorts of deſires to ſhare the benefits of the death of Chriſt. There is a deſire, unconnected with all the acts, which God hath been pleaſed to require of us, of this we are not ſpeaking. There is alſo another kind of deſire to ſhare the benefits of the death of Chriſt, a deſire, that animates

us with a determination to participate theſe benefits, whatever God may require, and whatever ſacrifices we may be obliged to make to poſſeſs them. This deſire, we think, conſtitutes the eſſence of faith. SERM. VIII.

The true believer enquires with the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny what God requires of him, and he finds three principal articles. Jeſus Chriſt, he perceives, is propoſed (if ye will allow me to ſpeak thus.) to his mind, to his heart, and to his conduct. Faith receives Jeſus Chriſt in all theſe reſpects; in regard to the mind, to regulate its ideas by the deciſions of Jeſus Chriſt alone; in regard to the heart, to embrace that felicity only, which Jeſus Chriſt propoſeth to its hope; in regard to the conduct, to make the laws of Jeſus Chriſt the only rules of action. Faith, then, is that diſpoſition of ſoul, which receives Jeſus Chriſt wholly, as a teacher, a promiſer, a legiſlator. Faith will enable us to admit the moſt incomprehenſible truths, the moſt abſtruſe doctrines, the moſt profound myſteries, if Jeſus Chriſt reveal them. Faith will engage us to wiſh for that kind of felicity, which is the moſt oppoſite to the deſires of fleſh and blood, if Jeſus Chriſt promiſe it. Faith will inſpire us with reſolution to break the ſtrongeſt ties, to mortify the moſt eager deſires, if Jeſus Chriſt command us to do ſo. This, in our opinion, is the only true notion of ſaving faith.

The terms of the propoſition being thus explained, we will go on to explain the whole propoſition, *the juſt ſhall live by his faith.* All depends on one diſtinction, which we ſhall do well to underſtand, and retain. There are two kinds, or cauſes of juſtification. The firſt is the fundamental, or meritorious cauſe; the ſecond is the inſtrumental cauſe. We call that the fundamental cauſe of our juſtification, which acquires, merits, and lays the foundation of our juſtification and ſalvation. By the inſtrumental cauſe we mean thoſe acts, which it hath pleaſed God to preſcribe to us, in order to our participation of this acquired ſalvation, and without

SERM. VIII: without which *Chriſt becomes of no effect to us*, according to the language of ſcripture. The fundamental cauſe of our juſtification is Jeſus Chriſt, and Jeſus Chriſt alone. It is Jeſus Chriſt independently on our faith and love. If Jeſus Chriſt had not died, our faith, our repentance, and all our efforts to have been ſaved would have been in vain, *for other foundation can no man lay than that, which is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* Verily, If any thing could conciliate God to men, ye excruciating agonies of my ſaviour! thou perfect ſatisfaction! thou bloody death! ſacrifice propoſed to man immediately after his fall! ye only, only ye, could produce this great effect! Accurſed, Accurſed be he, who preacheth another goſpel! *God forbid that I ſhould glory ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Gal. v. 4.

1 Cor. iii. 11.

Acts, iv. 12.

Gal. vi. 14.

But when we enquire how we are juſtified, we do not enquire the meritorious cauſe of ſalvation; we ſuppoſe ſalvation already merited: but we aſk, what is eſſential to our participation of it? To this we reply, faith, faith alone, but ſuch a faith however, as we have deſcribed, a living faith, faith as a principle of renovation; faith, which receiveth the deciſions of Jeſus Chriſt, embraceth his promiſes, and enables us to devote ourſelves to his ſervice. This is the ſenſe, in which we underſtand the propoſition in the text, *the juſt ſhall live by his faith.* It is not ſufficient to explain the propoſition, we muſt prove, and eſtabliſh it againſt erroneous divines, and looſe caſuiſts. This is our ſecond article.

II. We oppoſe our ſyſtem, firſt, againſt that of ſome erroneous divines. We have a controverſy on this ſubject, not only with thoſe enemies of our myſteries, who conſider Jeſus Chriſt only as a legiſlator, diſtinguiſhed from other moraliſts only by the clearneſs of his moral principles, and the power of his motives: but

but we have alſo a famous diſpute with the divines of the church of Rome on this head, and we attack that part of their doctrine, which we call the merit of good works. SERM. VIII.

In order to underſtand this controverſy clearly, we muſt obſerve, that the members of the church of Rome are divided into two claſſes on this article. In the firſt claſs we place thoſe divines, who, without any reſtrictions or qualifications, maintain this unwarrantable theſis, good works merit heaven, as bad ones deſerve hell. The ſecond affirm, that good works do, indeed, merit heaven: but in virtue of the mercy of God, and of the new covenant, that he hath made with mankind.

When we diſpute againſt the errors of the church of Rome, we ſhould carefully diſtinguiſh theſe opinions. It muſt be granted, proteſtants have not always done ſo. We ſpeak as if the church of Rome as a body held this theſis, good works merit heaven, as bad ones deſerve hell; whereas this is an opinion peculiar to only ſome of their divines; it has been cenſured and condemned by a bull of Pius v. and Gregory xiii. as one of our moſt celebrated divines has proved, whom, although his pious deſign of conciliating our diſputes may have made him rather exceed his evidence in ſome of his affirmations, we cannot contradict on this article, becauſe he proves it by inconteſtible evidence.* But the ſecond opinion is profeſſedly that of the whole church of Rome. This canon, which I am going to repeat to you, is the deciſion of the council of Trent. *Eternal life is to be propoſed to the children of God both as a gift mercifully offered to them through Jeſus Chriſt, and as a promiſed reward equitably rendered to their merits and good works in virtue of this promiſe.*§

We

* See the Theſes of Mons'r Louis Le Blanc.

§ Proponenda eſt vita eterna, et tanquam Gratiæ filiis dei per Chriſtum Jeſum, miſericorditer promiſſa et tanquam merces ex ipſius Dei promiſſione, bonis ipſorum operibus et meritis fideliter reddenda.

Concil. Trid. Seſs. vi. c. 16.

SERM. VIII. We oppoſe our ſyſtem againſt both theſe opinions. To ſay, with the firſt of theſe divines, that good works merit heaven, as bad works deſerve hell, is to affirm a propoſition, which Rome itſelf denies. What! works, that bear no propoſition to objects of our hope, a few meditations, a few prayers, a few almſdeeds! What! would the ſacrifice of our whole ſelves merit that *eternal weight of glory*, which is to be revealed in us? What! can works, that are not performed by our power, works, that proceed from grace, works, which owe their deſign and execution to God, who *worketh to will, and to do*, as S. Paul expreſſeth it, can theſe attain, do theſe deſerve a *weight of glory* for us? Does not the whole, that we poſſeſs, come from God? If we know the doctrines of revelation, is it not becauſe *the Father of glory hath enlightened the eyes of our underſtanding*? If we believe his deciſions, is it not becauſe he *gave* us *faith*? If we ſuffer for his goſpel, is it not becauſe he *gives* us ſtrength *to ſuffer*? What! works, that are of themſelves inſeperably connected with our ſtations, and therefore duties, indiſpenſible engagements, debts, and debts, alas! which we diſcharge ſo badly, can theſe merit a reward? God forbid we ſhould entertain ſuch an opinion! Even Cardinal Bellarmine, after he had endeavoured more than any other writer to eſtabliſh the merit of good works, with one ſtroke of his pen effaced all his arguments, for, ſaid he, on account of the precarioufneſs of our own righteouſneſs, and the danger of vain glory, the ſafeſt method is to have recourſe to the mercy of God, and to truſt in his mercy alone.*

Phil. ii. 13.

Eph. i. 17. 18.

Phil. i. 29

But we oppoſe alſo the other opinion, that we have mentioned. For, although it may ſeem to be purified from that venom, which we have remarked in the firſt, yet it is attended with two inconveniences.

1. It is contradictory in terms. A work, that derives its value from the mercy of God is called meritorious. What an aſſociation of terms? Merit, Mercy. If it be of mercy, how is it meritorious; If it be meritorious,

* Card. Bell. Controvers. T. iv. De Juſtif. Lib. 1.

torious, how is it of mercy? *If by grace, then is it no more of works: but if it be of works then is it no more grace.* Ye know the language of S. Paul. SERM. VIII. Rom. xi. 6.

2. This opinion furniſheth a pretext to human pride, and whether this be not ſufficiently evident, let experience judge. Do we not often ſee people, who, not being capable of entering into thoſe theological diſtinctions, which are contained in the writings of their teachers, think by their good works, and often by their ſuperſtitions, ſo to merit eternal felicity, that God cannot deprive them of it without ſubverting the laws of his juſtice? Hath not the church of Rome other doctrines, which lead to this error? Is not ſupererogation of this kind? According to this a man may not only fully perform all his engagements: but he may even exceed them. Is not the doctrine, that excludes merit, conſidered by many of the Roman community as a mark of hereſy? If we believe an anecdote in the life of Charles V. it was principally for having written on the walls of his room ſeveral paſſages of Scripture excluding the merit of works, that he was ſuſpected of adhering to our doctrines, and that the inquiſition deliberated on puniſhing him after his death as an heretick. The inquiſitors would certainly have proceeded againſt him, had not Philip II. been given to underſtand that the ſon of an heretick was incapable of ſucceeding to the crown of Spain. *

Againſt this ſyſtem we oppoſe that, which we have eſtabliſhed. We conſider Jeſus Chriſt, Jeſus Chriſt alone, as the meritorious cauſe of our juſtification. If faith juſtifies us, it is as an inſtrument, that of itſelf can merit nothing, and which contributes to our juſtification only as it capacitates us for participating the benefits of the death of Chriſt. Theſe were the ideas of the ancient church. The divines of primitive times taught, that men were righteous, who acknowledged

* L'Abbe de S Real, Hiſtoire de Don Carlos.

SERM. VIII. knowledged their guilt, and that they had nothing of their own but ſin, and who, although they were ſaints, yet attributed nothing to their own merit. On theſe principles, we find, in an ancient work attributed to Anſelm, Archbiſhop of Canterbury, the ſick were comforted in this manner. *Doſt thou truſt in the merit of Jeſus Chriſt alone for ſalvation?* The ſick perſon replied, *I do.* The aſſiſtant then added, *Praiſe God to the laſt moment of your life; place all your confidence in him; and, when the Supreme Judge of the World calls you to his tribunal, ſay to him, Lord! I interpoſe between thy righteous judgment and myſelf the death of thy ſon, and I aſcribe no merit to any good work of my own.*

Thus we oppoſe the merit of works. But it is dangerous for thoſe, who preach to people prone to one extreme, to expreſs themſelves ſo as to ſeem to favour the oppoſite extreme. Although all our divines unanimouſly connect faith and holineſs together, yet, there is great reaſon to fear, our people carry their averſion againſt the doctrine of merit ſo far that they loſe ſight of this union of faith and obedience. A man, whoſe great labours in the church prevent our mentioning his name, while we reprove his error, has affirmed theſe propoſitions—the Goſpel conſiſts of promiſes only—Jeſus Chriſt gave no precepts—we are under no other obligations than thoſe of gratitude to obey the laws of religion—our ſouls are in no danger if we neglect them.

Againſt theſe ideas we again oppoſe our ſyſtem of juſtification. We affirm, that juſtifying faith is a general principle of virtue and holineſs; and that ſuch a recourſe to the mercy of God, as wicked chriſtians imagine, doth not juſtify in any ſenſe. It doth not juſtify as the meritorious cauſe of our ſalvation; for to affirm this is to maintain an hereſy. We have ſaid Jeſus Chriſt, Jeſus Chriſt alone is the foundation of our ſalvation, and our moſt ardent deſire to participate the benefits of it is incapable of deſerving them.

It

It doth not juſtify as a condition. To affirm, that to have recourſe to the grace of Jeſus Chriſt is the only condition, that the Goſpel requires, is to mutilate the Goſpel, apparently to widen beyond all ſcriptural bounds the way to heaven, and really to open a large and ſpacious road to eternal perdition. S. E. R. M. VIII.

If there be one in this aſſembly ſo unacquainted with chriſtianity as to ſuppoſe that he may be juſtified before God by a fruitleſs deſire of being ſaved, and by a barren recourſe to the death of Chriſt, let him attend to the following reflections.

1. Juſtifying faith is lively faith, a believer cannot live by a dead faith: but *faith without works is dead.* Conſequently the faith, that gives life, is a faith containing, at leaſt in principle, all virtues. James ii. 20.

2. Juſtifying faith muſt aſſort with the genius of the covenant, to which it belongs. Had the Goſpel no other deſign than that of pardoning our ſins, without ſubduing them, faith might then conſiſt in a bare act of the mind accepting this part of the Goſpel: but, if the Goſpel propoſeth both to pardon ſin, and to enable us to renounce it, faith, which hath to do with this covenant of grace, muſt needs involve both theſe articles. Now, who will pretend to ſay, the Goſpel hath not both theſe bleſſings in view? And conſequently, who can deny, that faith conſiſts both in truſting the grace, and in obeying all the laws of the Goſpel?

3. Juſtifying faith muſt include all the virtues, to which the Scripture attributes juſtification and ſalvation. Now, if ye conſult the oracles of God, ye will perceive, Scripture ſpeaks a language, that will not comport with the doctrine of fruitleſs faith. Sometimes ſalvation is attributed to *love*, *Come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the kingdom, for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat.* Mat. xxv. 34. Sometimes it is attributed to *hope*, *Hope maketh not aſhamed.* Rom. v. 5. Sometimes to *faith*, *Whoſoever believeth in him ſhall have eternal life.* John iii. 15. I aſk now,

SERM. VIII. to which virtue, ſtrictly ſpeaking, does ſalvation belong? to love, to hope, or to faith? Or rather, is it not clear, that, when Scripture attributes ſalvation to one of theſe virtues, it doth not conſider it ſeperately, as ſubſiſting in a diſtinct ſubject, but it conſiders it as flowing from that general principle, which acquieſces in the whole Goſpel.

4. Juſtifying faith muſt merit all the praiſes, which are given to it in Scripture. What encomiums are beſtowed on faith! It unites us to Jeſus Chriſt. It *crucifieth us*, as it were, *with him*, it *raiſeth us up together*, and makes us *ſit together with him in heavenly places*, in a word, it makes us *one with him, as he is one with the Father*. But the bare deſire of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt devoid of obedience to him, is this to be *crucified* with Jeſus Chriſt? Is this to be *riſen* with him? Is this to *ſit in heavenly places* with him?

Gal. ii. 20. Eph. ii. 6. John xvii. 20.

5. Juſtifying faith muſt enter into the ſpirit of the myſtery, that acquires juſtification for us; I mean the myſtery of the ſatisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt. What is the ſyſtem of our churches on the myſtery of ſatisfaction? Some divines among us have ventured to affirm, that God was entirely free either to exact the puniſhment due to ſin, or to releaſe mankind from all obligation to ſuffer it. He required a ſatisfaction, ſay they, becauſe of its greater fitneſs to expreſs to the whole univerſe his juſt abhorrence of ſin.

But the generally received doctrine among us is, that although God was entirely free when he puniſhed ſin, yet he was neceſſarily inclined to do it by the perfection of his nature; and that as, being an uniform ſpirit, it was *impoſſible for him to lie* and contradict himſelf, ſo, being a juſt and holy ſpirit, it was impoſſible for him to pardon ſinners without puniſhing ſin on ſome victim ſubſtituted in their ſtead.

Heb. vi. 18.

We will not now compare theſe ſyſtems, nor alledge the motives of our embracing one in preference to the other

other: But, this we affirm, chooſe which ye will, either affords a demonſtration in favour of our theſis. SERM. VIII.

In regard to the firſt, it may be juſtly ſaid, What! hath God, think ye? ſo much love for holineſs, and ſo much hatred of ſin, that, although he was not inclined to exact a ſatisfaction by neceſſity of nature, yet he choſe rather to do ſo than to let ſin paſs unpuniſhed! Hath God, think ye? ſacrificed his ſon, on account of the fitneſs of his ſufferings to remove every ſhadow of tolerating ſin! Do ye believe this, and can ye imagine, that a God, to whom ſin is ſo extremely odious, can approve of a faith, that is compatible with ſin, and which never gives vice its death-wound!

The demonſtration is equally clear in regard to thoſe, who embrace the general ſyſtem of our churches. How can a man perſuade himſelf, that the love of order is ſo eſſential to God, that he cannot without contradicting himſelf pardon the ſinner, and not puniſh the ſin; how, I ſay, can ſuch a man perſuade himſelf that ſuch a faith as we have exploded can enable us to participate the pardoning benefits of the death of Chriſt?

Is it not evident, that theſe two ſuppoſitions make a God contradictory to himſelf, and repreſent his attributes as claſhing with each other? In the firſt ſuppoſition, a God is conceived, to whom ſin is infinitely odious; in the ſecond a God is imagined, to whom ſin is perfectly tolerable. In the firſt a God is conceived, who naturally and neceſſarily requires a ſatisfaction; in the ſecond a God is imagined, who by a pliable facility of nature eſteems a ſinner although he derives from the ſatisfaction no motives to renounce his ſin. In the firſt, God is conceived as placing the ſtrongeſt barriers againſt ſin, and as ſacrificing the nobleſt victim to expreſs his inſuperable averſion to vice; in the ſecond, God is imagined as removing all obſtacles to ſin, and protecting men in the practice of it, nothing contributing more to confirm wicked men in ſin than the vain opinion, that, carry vice to what pitch they will,

SERM. VIII. will, they may be reconciled to God by the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, whenever they wiſh for the benefits of his ſacrifice.

To all theſe conſiderations add one more on the unanimous opinion of all your miniſters. In vain do ye attempt to ſeek pretexts for ſin in thoſe ſcholaſtick diſputes, and in thoſe different methods, which divines have ſtruck out in eſtabliſhing the doctrines of faith and juſtification. Your divines, I grant, have uſed expreſſions capable of very different meanings, on theſe articles. They are men, their geniuſſes, like thoſe of the reſt of mankind are finite, and they have diſcovered in the far greater part of all their ſyſtems the narrow limits of their minds. Intelligences, confined like ours, are neceſſarily ſtricken with a firſt truth more than with another truth, no leſs important and clear than the firſt. Every ſcience, every courſe of ſtudy, afford proofs of the truth of this remark: but the preſent ſubject of our enquiry abounds with evidence of this ſort. Some have been more ſtruck with the neceſſity of believing the truths of ſpeculation, than with that of performing the duties, which belong to theſe truths. Others have been more affected with the neceſſity of performing the duties of religion, than with that of adhering to the ſpeculative truths of it. Some, having lived among people believing the merit of works, have turned all their attention againſt the doctrine of merit, and have expreſſed themſelves, perhaps without deſign, in a manner, that ſeemed to enervate the neceſſity of good works. Others, on the contrary, having lived among libertines, who did not believe, or who affected not to believe the neceſſity of good works have turned all the point of their genius againſt this pernicious doctrine, and in their turn have expreſſed themſelves, perhaps without deſign, in a manner, that ſeemed to favour the notion of merit. Nothing is ſo rare as a genius comprehending at once the whole of any ſubject. As nothing in the military art is ſo rare as that ſelf-poſ-

ſeſſion,

ſeſſion, which enables a general to pervade a whole army, and to be preſent, ſo to ſpeak, in every part of the field of battle, ſo in the ſciences, nothing is ſo uncommon as that kind of comprehenſive attention, which enables a man always to think and ſpeak in perfect harmony with himſelf; and ſo to avoid deſtroying one part of his theſis, while he eſtabliſhes another part of it. But, after all, there is no real difference among your miniſters on this article. Whatever method they take, they all agree, that no man can be a true chriſtian, who does not receive Jeſus Chriſt as his prophet, prieſt, and king; that as faith unites us to Jeſus Chriſt, it is impoſſible for the members of a head ſo holy to continue in ſin. Now does not all this amount to a demonſtration that ſaving faith transforms the heart? SERM. VIII.

Let us examine the objections, which are made againſt this doctrine.

Is it pretended, that the deſign of excluding holineſs from the eſſence of faith is to elevate the merit of the death of Chriſt? But *O vain man!* Do not we elevate the merit of the death of Chriſt, we, who place it in our ſyſtem as the only foundation; the alone cauſe of the ſalvation of man, excluding works entirely, however holy they may be? James ii. 20.

Doſt thou ſay, thy deſign is to humble man? But, *O vain man!* What can be more proper to humble man than our ſyſtem, which ſhews him, that thoſe works are nothing, which do not proceed from the aſſiſtance of God; and that if God condeſcends to accept them, he does ſo through mere mercy, and not on account of their merit?

Doſt thou add, that our ſyſtem is contrary to experience, and doſt thou alledge the examples of many, who have been juſtified without performing one good work, and by the bare deſire of being ſaved by Jeſus Chriſt, as the converted thief, and many others, who have turned to God on a death bed? But *O vain man!*

What

SERM. VIII. What have we been eſtabliſhing? Have we ſaid, that a faith, which had not produced good works, was not a true faith? No, we have only affirmed, that a true faith muſt neceſſarily be a principle of good works. It may happen, that a man may have this principle, and may not have any opportunity of expreſſing it by practice, and of bringing it into action; he hath it, however, in intention. In this ſenſe we admit the maxims of S. Auguſtine, and if he did not underſtand it in our ſenſe, it ought to be underſtood ſo, *Good works*, ſays he, *do not accompany juſtification; but they follow it.* The thief, in one ſenſe, ſtrictly ſpeaking, did no good work: but in another ſenſe he did all good works. We ſay of him, as we ſay of Abraham, he did all in heart, in intention. Abraham, from the firſt moment of his vocation, was accounted to have abandoned his country, ſacrificed his ſon Iſaac, and wrought all thoſe heroical actions of chriſtian faith, which made him a model for the whole church. In like manner, the converted thief viſited all the ſick, clothed all the naked, fed all the hungry, comforted all the afflicted, and was accounted to have done all the pious actions, of which faith is the principle, becauſe he would infallibly have done them, had God afforded him opportunity.

Doſt thou ſay, our juſtification and ſalvation flow from a decree made before the foundation of the world, and not from our embracing the goſpel in time? But, *O vain man!* Do we deny the decree by ſhewing the manner of the accompliſhment of it? Do we deſtroy the end by eſtabliſhing the means? If your ſide can prove, without injuring the doctrine of decrees, that man is juſtified by a bare deſire of being juſtified, can we injure the ſame doctrine by aſſerting, that this deſire muſt proceed from the heart, and muſt needs aim to pleaſe God, as well as to be reconciled to him, and to ſhare his love?

Doſt thou ſtill object, that, although our ſyſtem is true in the main, yet it is always dangerous to publiſh

liſh it; becauſe man has always an inclination to *ſacrifice unto his own net, and burn incenſe unto his own drag*; that by preſſing the neceſſity of works, occaſion is inſenſibly given to the doctrine of merit? But, allow me to aſk, Is there no danger in the oppoſite ſyſtem? If ours ſeem to favour one vice, does not the oppoſite ſyſtem favour all vices? If ours ſeem to favour pride, does not the oppoſite ſyſtem favour it, and with it all other vices, revenge, calumny, adultery, and inceſt? And, after all, ſhould the abuſe of a holy doctrine prevent the uſe of it? Where, pray, are the men among us, who think to merit heaven by their good works? For our parts, we proteſt, my brethren! that, having examined a great number of conſciences, we find the general inclination the other way; people are in general more inclined to a careleſs reliance on a kind of general grace than to an induſtrious purchaſe of happineſs by good works. What is it, after all, that decoys thouſands before our eyes into the broad way of deſtruction? Is it an opinion, after they have been very charitable, that they merit by charity? Is it an opinion, after they have been very humble, that they merit by humility? Ah! my brethren! the greateſt part of you have ſo fully proved by your indiſpoſition to piety, that ye have no idea of the merit of good works, that there is no fear of ever eſtabliſhing this doctrine among you. But, to form looſe notions of obedience, to mutilate the covenant of grace, to render ſalvation the eaſieſt thing in the world, to abound in flattering ourſelves with hopes of ſalvation, although we live without love, without humility, without labouring to be ſaved; theſe are the rocks, againſt which we ſplit; theſe are the dangers, from which we would free you; this is the monſter, that we would never ceaſe to attack, till we have given it its death-wound.

SERM. VIII. Hab. i. 16.

I would then abhor myſelf, deplore my frailty, bluſh at the remembrance of my beſt duties, caſt myſelf into the arms of divine mercy, and own all my

SERM. VIII. felicity derivable from grace. I would own, it is grace that elects; grace which calls; grace that juſtifies; grace which ſanctifies; grace that accepts a ſanctification always frail and imperfect: but, at the ſame time, I would watch over myſelf, I would arouſe myſelf to duty, I would *work out my ſalvation with fear and trembling*; and, while I acknowledge grace does all, and my works merit nothing, I would act as if I might expect every thing from my own efforts.

Phil. ii. 12.

Verily, Chriſtians! theſe are the two diſpoſitions, which, above all others, we wiſh to excite in your minds and hearts. Theſe are the two concluſions, that ye ought to draw from this diſcourſe; a concluſion of humility, and a concluſion of vigilance: A concluſion of humility, for behold the abyſs into which ſin had plunged you, and ſee the expence, at which ye were recovered from it. Man had originally a clear judgment, he knew his creator and the obedience that was due to him from his creatures. The path of happineſs was open to him, and he was in full poſſeſſion of power to walk in it. All on a ſudden he ſins, his privileges vaniſh, his knowledge is beclouded, and he is deprived of all his freedom. The man, the man, who held the nobleſt dominion in nature, falls into the moſt abject of all kinds of ſlavery. Inſtantly the heavens *reveal his iniquity, the earth riſes up againſt him*, lightnings flaſh in his eyes, thunders roll in his ears, and univerſal nature announces his final ruin. In order to reſcue him from it, it was neceſſary for the mercy and juſtice of God to *ſhake heaven and earth*; God muſt *take upon him the form of a ſervant*; the moſt excellent of all intelligent beings muſt die in order to ſave him from eternal death.

Job xx. 27.

Heb. xii. 26.

Phil. ii. 7.

This is not all. Even ſince Jeſus Chriſt hath ſaid to us, This is the path to paradiſe; that is the broad way to deſtruction; a fatal charm ſtill faſcinates our eyes, a dreadful propenſity to miſery yet carries us away. Here again the nature and fitneſs of things require the aſſiſtance of heaven. Grace, that revealed

ſalvation,

ſalvation, muſt diſpoſe us to accept it, and muſt ſave us, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, in ſpite of our own unhappy diſpoſition to vice and miſery. After ſo many crimes, amidſt ſo many errors, in ſpite of ſo many frailties, who, who dare lift up his head? Who can preſume to truſt himſelf? Who can imagine himſelf the author of his own ſalvation, and expect to derive it from his own merit? SERM. VIII.

Hide, hide thyſelf in the duſt, miſerable man! ſmite thy breaſt, fix thine eyes on the aſhes, from which thou waſt taken. Lift up thy voice in theſe penitential cries, *If thou, Lord! ſhouldeſt mark iniquities: O Lord! who ſhall ſtand? O Lord! righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee: but unto us confuſion of face. God forbid that I ſhould glory ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Lay thy pretenſions, thy virtues, thy merits at the foot of this croſs. Diveſt thyſelf of thyſelf, and tear from thy heart, if poſſible, the laſt fibre of that pride, which would obſtruct thy ſalvation, and inſure thy deſtruction. Pſ. cxxx. 3. Dan. ix. 7. Gal. vi. 14.

But, my brethren! ſhall this be the whole of your religion? will ye acknowledge no other engagement? Does this ſhort ſyſtem, think ye, include the whole of a chriſtian's calling? Let us add to this, brethren! watchfulneſs. As no vices are ſo dangerous as thoſe, which preſent themſelves to us under the ideas of exalted virtues, ſuch as hatred under a colour of zeal, pride under an appearance of ſeverity and fervour, ſo no errors ſlide more eaſily into our minds than thoſe, which conceal themſelves under the names of the great truths of religion. To plead for human innocence, to deny the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, to pretend to elevate our good works ſo high as to make them the price of eternal felicity, are errors ſo groſs, and ſo diametrically oppoſite to many expreſs declarations of ſcripture, that a little love for truth, and a ſmall ſtudy of religion will be ſufficient to preſerve us from them. But under pretence of venerating the croſs of Chriſt, and of holding faſt the doctrine of human depravity, with the pious deſign of humbling man, under, I know not what,

SERM. VIII. what, veils of truth and orthodoxy to widen the way to heaven, and to lull whole communities of Chriſtians into ſecurity; theſe are the errors, that ſoftly and imperceptibly glide into our ſouls, as, alas! were not the nature of the ſubject ſufficient to perſuade you, experience, the experience of moſt of you would eaſily convince you.

ii. 26. But ye have heard the maxim of S. James, *faith without works is dead.* This maxim is a touchſtone, by which ye ought to try yourſelves.

One of you believes, there is a God: *faith without works is death.* Art thou penetrated with veneration for his perfections, admiration of his works, deference to his laws, fear of his judgments, gratitude for his bounties, and zeal for his glory?

Another believes, Chriſt died for his ſins: *faith without works is death.* Doſt thou abhor thy ſins for ſhedding his blood, for preparing his croſs, for wounding his perſon, for piercing his ſide, for ſtirring up a war between him and divine juſtice, for making him cry in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, *Now is my ſoul troubled, my ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death, My God! My God! why haſt thou forſaken me?*

John xii. 27. Mat. xxvi. 38.

Thou believeſt, there is a future ſtate: *faith without works is dead.* Doſt thou place thy heart where thy treaſure is? Doſt thou anticipate by faith and hope the bleſſed period of thine admiſſion to future felicity? Doſt thou *deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt?* Is thy *ſoul a thirſt for God?* Doſt thou *pant after him, as the hart panteth after the water brooks?*

Phil. i. 23. Pſ. xlii. 1. 2.

Ah formidable maxim! Ah dreadful touchſtone! We wiſh God had not only fitted religion, ſo to ſpeak, to our frailties and infirmities; we want him alſo to accommodate it to our inveterate vices. We act as if we deſired, that the ſacrifice, which was once offered to free us from the puniſhment of ſin, and to merit the pardon of it, had been offered again to free us from the neceſſity of ſubduing it, and to merit a right for us to commit

commit it. What madneſs! From the days of Adam to this moment conſcience has been the terror of mankind; and this terror, excited by an idea of a future ſtate, and by the approach of death, hath inclined all men to ſeek a remedy againſt this general and formidable evil. Philoſophers, Divines, Libertines, Worldly heroes, all have failed in this deſign. Jeſus Chriſt alone has ſucceeded in it. Only Jeſus Chriſt preſents to us this true remedy ſo ardently deſired, and ſo vainly ſought; and we ſtill refuſe it, becauſe our vices, fatal as they have been to us, are ſtill the objects of our moſt eager deſires. SERM. VIII.

But do ye know what all theſe objects of our contemplation ſuppoſe? Conſcience, if we liſten to its voice, death and futurity, if we attend to them, the doctrine, the humbling doctrine of juſtification, that we have been preaching to you, all ſuppoſe, that we are criminals, that the wrath of heaven is kindled againſt us, that the eternal books, in which our actions are regiſtered, are opening, that our judge is ſeated, our trial coming on, our final doom preparing, and that there remains no refuge from all theſe miſeries but Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe name is announced, that we may eſcape the wrath to come, and be ſaved. To him let us flee. To him let us reſign our minds, our hearts, and our lives. God give us grace to do ſo. To him be honour and glory for ever, Amen,

SER-

SERMON IX.

REPENTANCE.

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REPENTANCE.

2 CORINTHIANS vii. 10.

Godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation not to be repented of: but the ſorrow of the world worketh death.

THE words, that we have read, and with which we propoſe to cheriſh your devotion in this exerciſe, are connected, not only with the preceding verſes, but alſo with a part of that epiſtle, which S. Paul had written to Corinth before this. This connection is the propereſt comment on the ſenſe of the text; with this, therefore, we begin, and this part of our diſcourſe will require your particular attention.

Our apoſtle had ſcarcely planted the goſpel at Corinth, and formed the profeſſors of it into a chriſtian church, before one of the moſt atrocious crimes was committed in the community. Ought we to be ſurpriſed, that we, inferior diſciples of the apoſtles, fail in attempting to prevent, or to correct ſome exceſſes? Churches founded and edified by inſpired men were not exempt from them. In the church of Corinth we ſee impure, and even inceſtuous practices. How abominable ſoever the crime was, S. Paul was leſs chagrined at it, than at the conduct of the Corinthian church towards the perpetrators of it. It is not aſtoniſhing to find ſome in a large congregation, who

SERM. IX. are the execration of nature. Of the twelve diſciples, whom Jeſus Chriſt choſe for apoſtles, *one* was a *devil.* But that a whole congregation, a chriſtian congregation, ſhould conſider ſuch a monſter with patience, and, inſtead of puniſhing his crime, ſhould form pretexts to palliate, veils to conceal it, is ſurely the height of depravity. Such, however, were the Corinthians. Our apoſtle ſays, *ye are puffed up.* With what pride does he reproach them? How could any men poſſibly derive a glory from an abomination, which naturally inſpires mortification and ſhame? The *pride*, with which he reproaches them, is a diſpoſition too well known among chriſtians. It is the diſpoſition of a man, who pretends to free himſelf from the ordinary laws of moral rectitude, and to leave that path, in which the goſpel requires all chriſtians to walk, to the vulgar; who treats the juſt fear of a well-regulated conſcience, that trembles at the approach of ſin, as meanneſs of ſoul, and puſillanimity; and who accommodates the laws of religion to the paſſions, that govern him, and to the ſeaſons in which he has, or has not an opportunity of being wicked. Theſe were the diſpoſitions of the Corinthians in regard to the inceſtuous perſon. Perhaps they derived ſome exculpating maxims from the Jews. The Jews thought, that a man, who became a proſelyte to their religion, was thereby freed from thoſe natural ties, which before united him to his relatives, ſo that a man might innocently eſpouſe his ſiſter, or his mother, and ſo on. The pagans reproached the Jewiſh nation with this, and this, perhaps, might furniſh Tacitus with a part of the character, that he gave the Jews. What is conſidered by us as ſacred, ſays this celebrated hiſtorian, they treat as profane, and inceſtuous marriages, which ſhock us, they think lawful.

John vi. 70.

1 Cor. v. 2.

Hiſt. v. 4.

S. Paul rebukes the Corinthians for marking with a character of infamy, not only their own church: but in

in a manner the whole chriſtian world. Do ye, as if he had ſaid, conſider a crime with indifference, which is unknown even among heathens? *It is reported commonly, that there is fornication among you, and ſuch fornication as is not ſo much as named amongſt the Gentiles, that one ſhould have his father's wife.* Indeed, there are in pagan writings moſt ſevere laws againſt inceſt, and, what is very remarkable, the apoſtle ſeems to allude in the words juſt now cited to a paſſage in Cicero, who, ſpeaking of inceſt, calls it *ſcelus inauditum*, an unheard of crime. Accordingly, we find in Tertullian, in Minutius Felix, and in other famous apologiſts for chriſtianity, that inceſt was one of the diſorders, with which the pagans reproached the primitive chriſtians; the heathens either did, what has been too often done, charge a whole family, ſometimes a whole city, ſometimes a whole nation, with the fault of one member; or they thought nothing could blacken chriſtians more than taxing them with a vice, although falſly, which was held in the utmoſt deteſtation by all profeſſors of paganiſm. SERM. IX. 1. Cor. v. 1.

The apoſtle tells the Corinthians, that inſtead of having adopted, as they had, maxims, which ſeemed to palliate inceſt, they ſhould have imitated the conduct of the Jews, when they were obliged to excommunicate any ſcandalous offenders from their community. On theſe ſad occaſions, it was cuſtomary with the Jews to faſt, to weep, and to put on mourning, as if the perſon were dead. *Ye are puffed up, and have not mourned, as if he, who had done this deed, had been taken from you.* This cuſtom was followed afterward by chriſtians, witneſs a famous paſſage in the book entitled *apoſtolical conſtitutions*; (a) witneſs alſo theſe words of Origen, Chriſtians mourn as over the dead for thoſe, whom they are obliged to ſeperate from them; however odious and infectious a member of our body may be, we always do violence to ourſelves, when we are under 1. v. 2.

(a) Conſtit. Apoſtol. lib. ii. cap. 41.

SERM. IX. a neceſſity of cutting it off. (b) This is not all. S. Paul, not content with general cenſures and reproofs, thought this one of the extreme caſes, in which the honour of his apoſtleſhip would oblige him to take his eccleſiaſtical rod, and to perform one of thoſe formidable miracles, which God enabled the primitive chriſtians to work. Ye cannot but know, that among other miraculous gifts, which God communicated for the eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, that of inflicting remarkable puniſhments on ſome offenders was one of the moſt conſiderable. S. Peter employed this power againſt Ananias, whom he cauſed to fall dead at his feet, and againſt the wife of this miſerable prevaricator,

Acts v. 9. to whom he ſaid, *Behold! the feet of them, which have buried thy huſband, are at the door, and ſhall carry thee*

2 Cor. x. 46. *out.* S. Paul ſpeaks of this power in this ſtyle, *The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, in readineſs to revenge all diſobedience.* Our apoſtle uſed this power againſt Elymas the ſorcerer, and againſt Hymeneus and Alexander; he thought, he ought alſo

1 Cor. v. 5. uſe it againſt the inceſtuous Corinthian, and to *deliver him to Satan*; thus was this terrible diſpenſation deſcribed.

Such an exertion of apoſtolic power was indiſpenſibly neceſſary; it reclaimed thoſe by fear, whom mildneſs could not move; while an indulgence for ſuch a crime as this would have encouraged the commiſſion of many more. But the apoſtle, while he uſed this power, was extremely uneaſy on account of the

2 Cor. i. 4. neceſſity, that forced him to exerciſe it. *I wrote unto you*, ſays he, *out of much affliction and anguiſh of heart with many tears.* He not only declares, that he had no intention by puniſhing the culprit to deſtroy his ſoul; but that he even feared, thoſe ſharp cenſures, which his letter had engaged the Corinthian church to inflict, would produce impreſſions too terrific on the ſoul of the inceſtuous ſinner, or, as he expreſſes it, that he would be *ſwallowed up with over much ſorrow.*

7.

He

(b) Orig. lib. iii. cont. Celſum.

He goes farther in my text, and in the whole chapter, from which I have taken it. He wiſhes to indemnify himſelf for the violent anguiſh, that he had ſuffered, when he was obliged to treat his dear Corinthians with extreme rigour. He comforts himſelf by recollecting the ſalutary effects, which his zeal had produced, *Though I made you ſorry with a letter*, ſays he in the words immediately before the text, *I do not repent; though I did repent; becauſe ye ſorrowed to repentance, for ye were made ſorry after a godly manner.* In the text he eſtabliſheth this general maxim for all chriſtians, *Godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation not to be repented of: but the ſorrow of the world worketh death.* SERM. IX. vii. 8. 9.

The connection of the text with the whole ſubject, that we have been explaining, was, as I ſaid before, the beſt comment, that we could propoſe to explain the text itſelf. By what we have heard, it is eaſy to underſtand what *godly ſorrow* is, and what *the ſorrow of the world*. *Godly ſorrow* has for its object ſin committed againſt God, or rather, *godly ſorrow* is the grief of a man who repents of his ſins as God would have him repent; it is the ſorrow of a man, who afflicts himſelf not only becauſe he is miſerable, but becauſe he deſerves to be ſo; and becauſe hehath violated thoſe laws of righteouſneſs and holineſs, which his own conſcience approves. *The ſorrow of the world* is that, which hath worldly bleſſings for its object; or it is the grief of a man, who repents of his ſins as worldly men repent; it is the ſorrow of one who is more concerned for his miſery than for ſin, the cauſe of it, and who would even increaſe his crimes to get rid of his troubles. The ground of St. Paul's reaſoning then is this. *Godly ſorrow worketh repentance to ſalvation*, or, as it may be rendered, *ſaving repentance, not to be repented of*; that is to ſay, a man, who afflicts himſelf on the accounts, which we have mentioned, will be exerciſed at firſt, indeed, with violent anguiſh: but in a little time he will derive from this very anguiſh ſubſtantial comfort

and

SERM. IX. and joy, becauſe his ſorrow for ſin will induce him to ſubdue it, and to pray for the pardon of it. On the other hand, *the ſorrow of the world worketh death*, that is to ſay, either the ſorrow, which is occaſioned by the loſs of earthly enjoyments, is fatal to him, who gives himſelf up to it; for, as the wiſe man ſaith, *a broken ſpirit drieth the bones:* or *the ſorrow of the world worketh death*, becauſe ſuch a repentance as that of worldlings will never obtain the forgiveneſs, that is promiſed to thoſe, who truly repent. In this latter ſenſe I take the words here.

Prov. xvii. 22.

This is a general view of the ſcope of the apoſtle, and of his ideas in the text, ideas, which we muſt develop in order to lead you into the ſpirit of the holy ſupper of the Lord, that ſo the ſermon may contribute to the devotion of the day. I ſpeak of thoſe ideas, which St. Paul gives us of *godly ſorrow, ſaving repentance, not to be repented of*; for, we cannot enlarge on that, which he calls *ſorrow of the world*, without diverting your attention from the ſolemn ſervice of this day. We will, therefore, content ourſelves with tracing a few characters of it in the body of this diſcourſe, that ye may perceive how different the virtue, which the apoſtle recommends, is from the vice, which he intends to deſtroy.

Godly ſorrow, then, is the principal object of our contemplation, and there are three things, that demand a particular attention. The *cauſes*, which produce it; the *effects*, that follow it; and the *bleſſings*, with which it is accompanied. The *firſt* of theſe articles will deſcribe your ſtate a few days ago, when, examining your conſciences, (if, indeed, ye did examine them,) ye were overwhelmed with a remembrance of your ſins. How could ye caſt your eyes on theſe ſad objects without feeling that ſorrow, which a penitent expreſſes thus, *O Lord! righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee: but unto me confuſion of face. Againſt thee, thee only, O God! have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight?* The ſecond

Dan. ix. 7. Pſal. li. 4.

cond article will deſcribe your preſent condition. How can ye feel *godly ſorrow* without reſolving by reiterated acts of love to God to diſſipate that darkneſs, which covered all the evidences of your love to him, during the whole courſe of your ſins? The third article will deſcribe your future condition, through life, at death, in the day of judgment, and throughout all eternity. Happy periods! joyful revolutions! in which penitent ſouls, waſhed in the redeemer's blood, may expect nothing but grace, glory, and fulneſs of joy! This is the whole plan of this diſcourſe. Bleſſed be God, who calls to day to exerciſe ſuch an honourable miniſtry! What pleaſure to preach ſuch a goſpel to a people, to whom we are united by the tendereſt love! *O ye Corinthians!* O ye our beloved brethen, *our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not ſtraitened in us: but ye are ſtraitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the ſame, (I ſpeak as unto my children.) be ye alſo enlarged.* SERM. IX. 2 Cor. vi. 11, 12, 13.

I. *The remembrance of ſin is the cauſe of godly ſorrow in the heart of a true penitent.* The ſinner, of whom I am ſpeaking, is to be conſidered in two different periods of time. In the firſt he is under the infatuation of ſin; in the laſt after-reflections on his ſinful conduct fill his mind. While a ſinner is committing ſin, he reſembles an enchanted man, a fatal charm faſcinates his eyes, and *ſears his conſcience*, as St. Paul ſpeaks. He judges of truth and error, happineſs and miſery, only according to the intereſt of his reigning paſſion. Reaſon, perſuade, preach, cenſure, terrify, thunder, open the treaſures of heaven and the abyſſes of hell, the ſinner remains inſenſible; *ſo fooliſh and ignorant is he, he is like a beaſt before you*, according to the language of Aſaph. 1 Tim. iv. 2. Pſal. lxxiii. 22.

But there is another period, which I called a time of after-reflection on his ſinful conduct. Then the remembrance of ſin is cutting. Then his ſoul is full of fears, regrets, grief, remorſe, reproach. Then that ſin, like

SERM. VIII. Rev. x. 10.

like the book, that S. John *ate*, which had been *ſweet as honey in his mouth*, becomes *bitter in his belly*. Then the ſinner beholding himſelf, and entering into his heart, finds himſelf wounded with ſeven darts:—with the *number* of his ſins—with the *enormity* of them—with the *vanity of the motives*, which induced him to commit them—with their fatal *influences* on the minds of his neighbours—with that cruel *uncertainty*, into which they have deluded his own *conſcience*—with the horrors of *hell*, of which they are the uſual cauſes—and with thoſe ſad *reflections*, with which they inſpire an *ingenuous loving* heart.

1. The ſinner is affected with the *number* of his ſins. When we reflect on our paſt lives, ſins ariſe from all parts, and abſorb our minds in their multitude. We owe all our exiſtence to a ſupreme being, and we are reſponſible to him for every moment of our duration. There are duties of age, obligations, that belong to childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. There are duties of fortune, obligations, that lie upon people rich, poor, or in a middle-ſtation of life. There are civil obligations, which belong to magiſtrates and ſubjects. There are domeſtic duties, which belong to us as parents or children, maſters or ſervants. There are eccleſiaſtical duties, belonging to us as paſtors or people, preachers or hearers. There are duties of circumſtance, binding on us as ſick or well, in ſociety or in ſolitude. Each of theſe is a claſs of obligations, and almoſt each of them is a liſt of crimes. Moſt men deceive themſelves on this ſubject; they contract their notion of morality, maim the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, reduce their duties to a ſmall number, which they can eaſily perform, and at length form their idea of repentance by that, which they imagine of their obligations. But ſuppoſe the penitent in queſtion free from theſe prejudices, and finding his guilt every where, pronouncing himſelf guilty as a magiſtrate, and as a ſubject;

ject; as a father, and as a ſon; as a ſervant, and as a maſter; as a youth, and as an old man; as a rich and as a poor man; as enjoying his health, and as pining in want of it; as paſtor, and as one of the people; as preacher, and as hearer. People ſometimes affect to be aſtoniſhed, and to complain, becauſe we ſay in our confeſſions of ſin, that we have ſinned from the moment of our nativity, and that the number of our ſins is greater than that of the hairs on our heads. However, theſe are not hyperbolical expreſſions; the greateſt ſaints have uſed them; and a cloſe examination of our lives will convince us of their exact conformity to truth. SERM. IX.

Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man *are only evil continually. Our iniquities are increaſed over our heads, and our treſpaſs is grown up into the heavens. Who can underſtand his errors? O Lord let thy loving-kindneſs preſerve me, for innumerable evils have compaſſed me about, they are more than the hairs of mine head.* Gen. vi. 5. Ezra ix. 6. Pſal. xix. 13. xl. 11, 12.

2. The true penitent adds, to a juſt notion of the number of his ſins, that of their *enormity*. Here, again, we muſt remove the prejudices, that we have imbibed concerning the morality of Jeſus Chriſt; for here alſo we have altered his doctrine, and taken the world for our caſuiſt, the maxims of looſe worldlings for our ſupreme law. We have reduced great crimes to a few principal enormous vices, which few people commit. There are but few murderers, but few aſſaſſins, but few highway robbers, ſtrictly ſpeaking: other ſins, according to us, are frailties incidental to humanity, neceſſary conſequences of human infirmity, and not evidences of a bad heart. But, undeceive yourſelves, lay aſide the morality of the world, take the law of Jeſus Chriſt for your judge, and conſider the nature of things in their true point of light. For example, what can be more oppoſite to the genius of Chriſtianity than that ſpirit of pride, which reigns over almoſt all of us, which diſguiſes us from ourſelves, which clothes us with, I know not what, phantom of grandeur, and ſelf-

SERM. IX. importance, and which perſuades us, that a little money, a diſtant relation to a noble family, a little genius, a little countenance and applauſe, entitle us to an elevation above the reſt of mankind, and to the fantaſtick privilege of conſidering ourſelves as men made of a mould different from that of the reſt of mankind? What can be more criminal than thoſe calumnies, and ſlanderous falſhoods, which infect the greateſt part of our converſations; to maintain which we pretend to penetrate the moſt hidden receſſes of a neighbour's heart, we publiſh his real faults, we impute others to him, of which he is perfectly innocent, we derive our happineſs from his miſery, and build our glory on his ſhame? What more execrable than habitual ſwearing and profaning the name of Almighty God? Is it not ſhocking to hear ſome, who profeſs chriſtianity, daily profane religion, revile its inſtitutions, blaſpheme their creator for an unfavourable caſt of a die, or turn of a card? In general, can any thing be more injurious to Jeſus Chriſt than that attachment, which moſt of us have to the world, although in different degrees? What more fully proves our light eſtimation of his promiſes, our little confidence in his faithfulneſs? My brethren, we tremble, when we hear of a wretch, whom hunger had driven to commit a robbery on the highway; or of a man mad with paſſion, who in a tranſport of wrath had killed his brother? But, would we enter into our own hearts, would we take the pains to examine the nature of our own ſins, we ſhould ſoon find ourſelves ſo black and hideous, that the diſtance, which partial ſelf-love puts between us and the men, at whom we tremble, would diminiſh and diſappear.

3. A third idea, that afflicts a penitent, is that of the fatal *influence*, which his ſins have had on the ſoul of his neighbour. My brethren, one ſin ſtrikes a thouſand blows, while it ſeems to aim at ſtriking only one. It is a contagious poiſon, which diffuſeth itſelf far and wide,

wide, and infects not only him, who commits it, but the greateſt part of thoſe, who ſee it committed. You are a father, you cannot ſin without dragging your children down the gulf, into which you precipitate yourſelf. Hence, we generally ſee, if a father be ignorant of religion, his children are ignorant of religion; if a mother be a mere worldling, her children are infatuated with love to the world. You are a paſtor, you cannot fall into ſin without inducing ſome of your flock to ſin too; there are always ſome people ſo weak, or ſo wicked, as to think they cannot do wrong, while they imitate you, while they take thoſe for their examples, who profeſs to regulate the conduct of others. S. Jerom ſays, The houſe and the conduct of a biſhop are conſidered as a mirror of public diſcipline, ſo that all think they do right, when they follow the example of their biſhop. You are a maſter, you cannot ſin without emboldening your apprentices and workmen to ſin, nor without making your families ſchools of error, and your ſhops academies of the devil. Dreadful thought! too capable of producing the moſt exquiſite ſorrow! What can a man think of himſelf, who, conſidering thoſe unhappy creatures who are already victims to the juſt diſpleaſure of God in hell, or who are likely to become ſuch, is obliged to ſay to himſelf, agreeably to the divers circumſtances, in which providence hath placed him, Perhaps this church, which hath produced only apoſtates, might have produced only martyrs, had I *declared the whole counſel of God* with plainneſs and courage? Perhaps this family, that is plunged into ignorance, fallen from ignorance to vice, and from vice into perdition, might have produced an *Oneſimus, a partner of the ſaints*, had I cauſed the ſpirit of piety and virtue to have animated the houſe! Perhaps this child, given me to be made an offering to the Lord, and ſo to become *my joy and crown*, through all eternity may execrate me as the author of his miſery; he, perhaps, may juſtly reproach me, and ſay, Unwor-

SERM. IX.

Acts xx. 27.

Philem. 10. 17.

Phil. iv. 1.

SERM. IX. thy parent, it was by imitating thy fatal example that I was brought into this intolerable condition; they were thine abominable maxims, and thy pernicious actions, which involved me firſt in ſin and then in puniſhment in hell.

4. The weakneſs of *motives* to ſin is the fourth cauſe of the ſorrow of a penitent. When people find themſelves deceived in the choice of one out of many objects, they comfort themſelves by reflecting, either that all the objects had ſimilar qualifications to recommend them, or that their diſſimilarity was difficult to be known. But what proportion is there between motives to vice and motives to virtue? Attend a moment to motives to ſin. Sometimes a vapour in the brain, a rapidity in the circulation of the blood, a flow of ſpirits, a revolt of the ſenſes, are our motives to ſin. But after this vapour is diſſipated, after this rapidity is abated, after the ſpirits and ſenſes are calmed, and we reflect on what induced us to offend God, how can we bear the ſight of ourſelves without ſhame and confuſion of face? Motives to ſin are innumerable and very various: but what are they all? Sometimes an imaginary intereſt, an inch of ground, and ſometimes, a ſcepter, a crown, the conqueſt of the univerſe, *the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.* There comes, however, a moment, in which all theſe different motives are alike. When a man lies on a death bed, when all terreſtrial objects are diſappearing, when he begins to conſider them in their true point of light, and to compare ſcepters, conqueſts, crowns and kingdoms with the ideas of his own mind, the immenſe deſires of his heart, and the large plans of felicity, that religion traceth, he finds, he has been dazzled and miſled by falſe lights, and how in ſuch an hour can he bear to reflect on himſelf without ſhame and confuſion?

Mat. iv. 20.

5. I make a fifth article of the penitent's *uncertainty* of his ſtate. For although the mercy of God be

be infinite, and he never reject thoſe, who ſincerely repent, yet, it is certain, the ſinner in the firſt moments of his penitence hath reaſon to doubt of his ſtate, and till the evidences of his converſion become clear, there is almoſt as much probability of his deſtruction as of his ſalvation. Terrible uncertainty! ſo terrible, that, I am not afraid of affirming, except the torments of hell it is the moſt cruel condition, into which an intelligent being can be brought. Repreſent to yourſelves, if it be poſſible, the ſtate of a man, who reaſons thus. When I conſider myſelf, I cannot doubt of my guilt. I have added crime to crime, rebellion to rebellion. I have ſinned not only through infirmity and weakneſs: but I have been governed by principles hideous and deteſtable, incompatible with thoſe of good men, and with all hopes of paradiſe. I deſerve hell, it is certain, and there are in that miſerable place ſinners leſs guilty than myſelf. My ſentence, indeed, is not yet denounced: but what proof have I, that I have not ſinned beyond the reach of that mercy, which is held forth to ſinners in the goſpel? The goſpel ſays plainly enough, *If any man ſin, there is an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous:* but the ſame goſpel declares as plainly, that *it is impoſſible for thoſe, who were once enlightened, if they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.* I ſee indeed in the new teſtament a Peter, who repented and was pardoned, after he had denied his ſaviour: but the ſame book ſhews me alſo a Judas, who died in deſpair. On this ſide of a crucified Chriſt I ſee a converted thief: on the other hangs one, who perſiſting in impenitence expires in guilt unpardoned; and the blood of the ſaviour flowing all warm and propitious from his veins obtains in his ſight pardon for his partner, but none for him. I ſee indeed in the goſpel, that God invites the ſinner, and waits awhile for his return: but I ſee alſo, that this time is limited, that it is a fine day ſucceeded by a terrible night, that it is a meaſure, which

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1 John ii. 1.

Heb. vi. 4. 6.

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SERM. IX. the obſtinacy of a ſinner fills up. O happy days! in which I ſaw the face of my God, in which I could aſſure myſelf of my ſalvation, in which I chearfully waited for death as my paſſage to glory. Ah! whither are ye fled! Now, what muſt I think of myſelf? Have I committed only pardonable offences, or have I been guilty of thoſe crimes, for which there is no forgiveneſs? Shall I be forgiven as Peter was, or ſhall I be abandoned to deſperation like Judas? Shall I aſcend to paradiſe with the converted thief, or muſt I with his impenitent partner be caſt into the flames of hell? Will my redeemer deign to raiſe me by his life-giving voice from my grave to the reſurrection unto life, or will he doom me to deſtruction? Are *the riches* Rom. ii. 4. *of the goodneſs and forbearance of God* yet open to me, or are they cloſed againſt me? Am I a real penitent, or am I only an apparent one? Shall I be damned?—Shall I be ſaved?—Perhaps the one.—Perhaps the other.—Perhaps heaven.—Perhaps hell.—O fatal uncertainty!—Dreadful horror!—Cruel doubt!—This Job vi. 4. is the ſixth *arrow of the Almighty*, that wounds the heart of a repenting ſinner.

6. Perhaps *hell*. This is my ſixth reflection. Hell is an idea, againſt which there is no philoſophy to comfort, no profaneneſs to protect, no brutality to harden; for if we every day ſee men, who ſeem to be got above the fear of future puniſhment, it is becauſe we ſee at the ſame time men, who have found the art either of ſtupifying themſelves by the tumultuous noiſe of their paſſions, or of blinding themſelves by their infidelity. The very ſcepticiſm of theſe men marks their timidity. The very attempts, which they make to avoid thinking of hell, are full proofs, that they cannot bear the ſight of it. Indeed, who can ſupport the idea of the torments of hell, eſpecially when their duration is added? Yet, this is the idea, that ſtrikes a penitent, he condemns himſelf to ſuffer this puniſhment, he places himſelf on the edge of this gulf, and, if I may

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be allowed to ſpeak ſo, draws in the peſtilential va- SERM.
pours, that riſe from this bottomleſs abyſs. Every IX.
moment of his life, before he beholds God as his reconciled Father, is a moment, in which probably he may be caſt into hell, becauſe there is no period in the life of ſuch a man, in which it is not probable that he may die, and there is no death for one, who dies in impenitence, which will not be a death in a ſtate of reprobation.

7. In fine, the laſt arrow, that woundeth the heart of a penitent, is an arrow of divine *love*. The more we love God, the more miſery we endure, when we have been ſo unhappy as to offend him. Yes, this love, which inflames Seraphims, this love, which makes the felicity of Angels, this love, which ſupports the believer under the moſt cruel torments, this love is more terrible than death, and becomes the greateſt tormentor of the penitent. To have offended a God, whom he loves, a God, whom ſo many excellencies render lovely, a God, whom he longs again to love, notwithſtanding thoſe terrible looks, which he caſts on the ſins, that the penitent deplores; theſe thoughts excite ſuch ſorrows in the ſoul, as nothing but experience can give men to underſtand.

The union of all theſe cauſes, which produce ſorrow in a true penitent, forms the grand difference between that which S. Paul calls *godly ſorrow*, and that which he calls *the ſorrow of the world*, that is to ſay, between true repentance, and that uneaſineſs, which worldly ſyſtems ſometimes give another kind of penitents. The grief of the latter ariſeth only from motives of ſelf intereſt, from puniſhments, which they feel, or from conſequences, which they fear.

We have ſeen, then, the true cauſes of *godly ſorrow*, and we are now to attend to its effects, they conſtitute a ſecond remarkable difference between *godly ſorrow* and *the ſorrow of the world*.

II.

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II. S. Paul ſpeaks of the *effects* of *godly ſorrow* only in general terms in our text, he ſays, it *worketh repentance to ſalvation*: but in the following verſes he ſpeaks more particularly; *Behold, this ſelf-ſame thing, that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourſelves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement deſire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!* Some of theſe terms may perhaps be equivocal, however, we do not intend at preſent to enquire into the various ſenſes of them: but we will take them in that ſenſe, which ſeems moſt obvious, moſt agreeable to the ſtyle of S. Paul, and to the ſubject, of which he is ſpeaking.

There is alſo in the language of the apoſtle, in what he calls the *working of godly ſorrow*, ſomething relative to the ſtate of the Corinthian church in regard to the caſe of the inceſtuous perſon; and this ſeems particularly clear in the expreſſion, *yea, what revenge!* S. Paul very likely referred to the excommunication of this perſon by the Corinthian church. He had directed them in a former epiſtle, *when ye are gathered together, and my ſpirit, with the power of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, deliver ſuch a one unto Satan.* We have ſeen, that the puniſhments inflicted on ſuch perſons are called *vengeance*, and of this *revenge*, or *vengeance*, the apoſtle ſpeaks. Let us omit every thing perſonal, and let us attend only to that part of the ſubject, which regards ourſelves.

1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

The firſt effect of *godly ſorrow* is what our apoſtle calls *carefulneſs*, or, as I would rather read it, *vigilance, yea, what vigilance!* I underſtand by this term the diſpoſition of a man, who, feeling a ſincere ſorrow for his ſins, and being actually under the afflicting hand of God, is not content with a few general notions, and a little vague knowledge of his own irregularities: but uſes all his efforts to examine every circumſtance of his life, and to dive into the leaſt obvious parts of his own conſcience,

conſcience, in order to diſcover whatever is offenſive to that God, whoſe favour and clemency he moſt earneſtly implores. The penitence of worldlings, or, as S. Paul expreſſeth it, *the ſorrow of the world*, may indeed produce ſuch general notions, and ſuch a vague knowledge of ſin, as I juſt now mentioned. Afflicted people very commonly ſay, We deſerve theſe puniſhments, we are ſinners, very great ſinners: but thoſe penitents are rare, very rare indeed, who poſſeſs what our apoſtle calls *carefulneſs*, or vigilance. A chriſtian, who is truly affected with having offended God, labours with the utmoſt earneſtneſs to find out all, than can have contributed to excite the anger of God againſt him, and to engage him to redouble the ſtrokes of a juſt diſpleaſure. Perhaps it may be ſome connection attended with dangerous influences, which I have not perceived. Perhaps it may be the retention of ſome ill-acquired property, the injuſtice of acquiring which I have refuſed to acknowledge, leſt my conſcience ſhould drive me to make reſtitution. Perhaps I may have omitted ſome virtue eſſential to chriſtianity. God has taken away my fortune; but perhaps I abuſed it, perhaps it excited my pride, and made me forget my infirmities, my duſt and aſhes. God took away my child, the whole comfort of my life; but probably he ſaw, I made an idol of it, and ſuffered it to fill a place in my heart, which ought to have been reſerved for God alone. God ſent a ſickneſs, which I ſhould not have naturally expected: but perhaps, health was a ſnare to me, and held me from conſidering my laſt end. In view of ſuch a perſon our apoſtle would exclaim, *Behold, this ſelf-ſame thing, that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you!*

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What *clearing of yourſelves!* adds S. Paul. The Greek word ſignifies *apology*, and it will be beſt underſtood by joining the following expreſſion with it, *yea what indignation!* In *the ſorrow of the world* apology

SERM. IX. and indignation are uſually companions; indignation againſt him, who repreſents the atrocity of a ſin, and apology for him, who commits it. In what odious colours does this artful indignation deſcribe a man, who freely preacheth *the whole counſel of God*, repreſenting to every ſinner in its own point of light the crime, of which he is guilty! Sometimes we accuſe him of raſhneſs, as if a man ought never to reprove the vices of others unleſs he believes his own conduct is irreprehenſible. Sometimes, we reproach him with the very ſins which he cenſures in others, as if a man ought to be perfect himſelf, before he pretends to reprove the imperfections of his brethren. Sometimes we account him a maintainer of hereſies, as if it were impoſſible to preſs home the practice of religion without abjuring the ſpeculative doctrines, that are revealed in the ſame goſpel. S. Paul experienced this indignation as much as any miniſter of the goſpel. Indeed, it ſeems impoſſible, that a miniſtry ſo famous as his ſhould not expoſe itſelf to danger from the abundant malignity of the age, in which it was exerciſed. And this will always be the fate of all them, who walk in the ſteps of this apoſtle, and take his reſolution and courage for a model.

Acts xx. 27.

The ſame principle, that produceth *indignation* againſt thoſe, who reprove our diſorders, inſpires us with *apologies* to excuſe ourſelves. The reproved ſinner is always fruitful in excuſes, always ingenious in finding reaſons to exculpate himſelf, even while he gives himſelf up to thoſe exceſſes, which admit of the leaſt excuſe; one while, his time of life neceſſarily induces him to ſome ſins; another time, human frailty is incompatible with perfect piety; now he pleads the vivacity of his paſſions, which will ſuffer no controul; and then, he ſays, he is irreſiſtibly carried away with the force of example in ſpite of all his efforts.

Now, change the objects of *indignation*, and *apology*, and ye will have a juſt notion of the diſpoſitions of the Corinthians,

Corinthians, and of the effects, which *godly ſorrow* pro- SERM.
duce in the ſoul of a true penitent. Let your *apology* XX.
have for its object that miniſtry, which ye have treated ſo unworthily, let your *indignation* turn againſt yourſelves, and then ye will have a right to pretend to the prerogatives of true repentance. What ſins have ye lamented laſt week? Your exceſſive love of the world? Let this *ſorrow* produce an apology for the holy miniſtry; let it excite your indignation againſt yourſelves; acknowledge, that we had reaſon to affirm *the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God*; that *no man could ſerve two maſters*; that ſome amuſements, ſome oſtentatious airs, ſome liveries of the world ill become a chriſtian: and blame yourſelves, if ye be incapable of reliſhing this doctrine. What ſin have ye been lamenting? Avarice? Let this *ſorrow* apologiſe for the holy miniſtry, and let it excite your indignation againſt yourſelves. Acknowledge, we had reaſons ſufficient for ſaying, that *the love of money is the root of all evil*; that *covetouſneſs is idolatry*; that *the covetous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God*; that ſuch mean, low, ſordid ſentiments are unworthy of thoſe, whom Jeſus Chriſt hath received into communion with himſelf, whom he hath brought up in a ſchool of generoſity, diſintereſtedneſs, and magnanimity; who have ſeen in his perſon examples of all theſe noble virtues; and now find fault, if ye can, with any beſide yourſelves, if ye be incapable of digeſting this doctrine. *Behold, this ſelf-ſame thing, that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what carefulneſs it wrought in you, yea what apology, yea what indignation!*

James iv. 4. Mat. vi. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 10. Col. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 10.

The apoſtle adds, *yea, what fear!* By fear in this place we underſtand that ſelf-diffidence, which an idea of the ſins that we have committed, ought naturally to inſpire. In this ſenſe, S. Paul ſays to the Romans, *be not high-minded: but fear.* *Fear*, that is to ſay, diſtruſt thyſelf. I do not mean a bare ſpeculative diffidence, that perſuades the mind: I underſtand a practical fear, which penetrates the heart, inſpires us with

xi. 20.

SERM. IX. ſalutary cautions againſt the repetition of ſuch ſins as we are moſt inclined to commit. This effect, produced by *godly ſorrow*, is one of the principal characters, that diſtinguiſhes it from *the ſorrow of the world*, from that repentance, which is often found in falſe penitents. It is one of the ſureſt marks of real repentance, and one of the beſt evidences, that it is not imaginary. Let the occaſion of your penitential ſorrows in the paſt week teach you to know yourſelf, and engage you to guard thoſe tempers of your hearts, the folly of which your own experience has ſo fully taught you. Here you ſuffered through your inattention and diſſipation; *fear* leſt you ſhould fall by the ſame means again, guard againſt this weakneſs, ſtrengthen this feeble part, accuſtom yourſelf to attention, examine what relation every circumſtance of your life has to your duty. There you fell through your vanity; *fear* leſt you ſhould fall again by the ſame mean, guard againſt this weakneſs, accuſtom yourſelf to meditate on your original meanneſs, and on whatever can inſpire you with the grace of humility. Another time, you erred through your exceſſive complaiſance; *fear* leſt you ſhould err again by the ſame mean, guard againſt this weakneſs, accuſtom yourſelf to reſiſt importunity, when reſiſtance is neceſſary, and never bluſh to ſay, *It is right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto God more than unto you.* In ſuch a caſe, S. Paul would exclaim, *behold, this ſelf-ſame thing, that ye ſorrowed after a godly ſort, what fear it wrought in you!*

Acts iv. 19.

In the fifth place, *What vehement deſire!* This is another vague term. *Godly ſorrow* produceth divers kinds of deſire. Here I confine it to one meaning, it ſignifies, I think, a deſire of participating the favour of God, of becoming an object of the merciful promiſes, which he hath made to truly contrite ſouls, and of reſting under the ſhade of that croſs, where an expiatory ſacrifice was offered to divine juſtice for the ſins of mankind. A penitent, who ſees the favourable looks

looks of a compaſſionate God intercepted; a penitent, who cannot behold that adorable face, the ſmiles of which conſtitute all his joy; a penitent, who apprehends his God juſtly flaming with anger againſt him, *deſires* only one thing, that is to recover a ſenſe of the favour of God. *If thy preſence go not with me, carry us not up hence*, ſaid Moſes once; ſhould we conquer all the land of promiſe, and poſſeſs all its treaſures, and not enjoy thy love, we would rather ſpend all our days here in the deſert. *I will ariſe, and go to my Father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven and before thee, make me as one of thy hired ſervants:* this was the language of the prodigal ſon. And the prayer of the pſalmiſt is to the ſame purpoſe, *Caſt me not away from thy preſence, and take not thy holy ſpirit from me, reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation, and uphold me with thy free ſpirit.*

SERM. IX.

Exod. xxxiii. 15.

Luke xv. 18, 19.

Pſal. li. 11. 12.

Finally, *zeal* is the ſixth effect of *godly ſorrow*, and it may have three ſorts of objects, God, our neighbours, and ourſelves. But, as the time is nearly elapſed, and as I have ſhewn you in general what *godly ſorrow* is, and what effects are wrought in a penitent by it, I ſhall proceed to cloſe this diſcourſe by deſcribing the benefits that accompany it.

III. S. Paul expreſſes himſelf in a very conciſe manner on this article: but his language is full of meaning; repentance produced by *godly ſorrow*, ſays he, *is not to be repented of.* This is one of thoſe tours of expreſſion, by which, while a ſubject ſeems to be diminiſhed, the higheſt ideas are given of it. *Godly ſorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of*, that is to ſay, it is always a full ſource of conſolation and joy. Let us adapt ourſelves to the ſhortneſs of our time. *Godly ſorrow* reconciles us to three enemies, who, while we live in ſin, attack us with implacable rage. The firſt is divine juſtice; the ſecond our own conſcience; the laſt death.

1. The firſt enemy, who attacks us, while we live in ſin,

SERM. IX. ſin, with implacable rage, is the *juſtice* of God. There can be no other relation between God and an obſtinate ſinner than that, which ſubſiſts between judge and criminal; *God is of purer eyes than to behold evil*, and his juſtice points all its thunders againſt the devoted head of him, who gives himſelf up to the commiſſion of it. *Godly ſorrow* reconciles us to divine juſtice. This is perhaps of all propoſitions the leaſt diſputable, the moſt clear, and the moſt demonſtrable.

Heb. i. 13.

Conſult your own reaſon, it will inform you, God is good; it will prove, by all the objects, that ſurround you, that it is not poſſible for God to refuſe mercy to a penitent, who weeps, and mourns for ſin, who prays for mercy, who covers himſelf with ſackcloth and aſhes, who dares not venture to lift up his eyes to heaven, who would ſhed all his blood to attone for the ſins, that he hath committed, and who would not for the whole univerſe allow himſelf to commit them again.

To reaſon add authority, and it will appear, that all mankind profeſs to be guilty of ſin, and to adore a God of pardoning mercy, and, although numbers remain ignorant of the nature of true repentance, yet all allow, it is attended with excellent prerogatives.

To reaſon and authority add revelation. But how is it poſſible for me at preſent even to hint all the comfortable teſtimonies of revelation on this article? Revelation gives you ideas of the mercy of God the moſt tender, the moſt affecting, the moſt ſublime; it ſpeaks of *bowels troubled, repentings kindled together*, at the ſound of a penitent's plaintive voice. Revelation ſpeaks of oaths uttered by God himſelf, whoſe bare word is evidence enough, *As I live, ſaith the Lord*, (S. Paul tells us, *becauſe God could ſwear by no greater, he ſware by himſelf*; and in the text now quoted, God employs this kind of ſpeaking, an appeal to the moſt excellent of all beings, in order to ſatisfy the trembling conſcience of a penitent.) *As I live, ſaith the Lord, I have no pleaſure in the*

Jer. xxxi. 20.
Hoſ. xi. 8.
Ezek. xxxiii. 11.
Heb. vi. 13.

the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Revelation opens to you thoſe *fountains* of life, which were *opened to the houſe of David, and to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem*, and leads you to the blood of the Saviour of the world, which flows for penitent ſinners. SERM. IX. Zech. xiii. 1.

Conſult experience, and it will ſhew you a cloud of witneſſes, whoſe repentance was accepted. Witneſs many a time the whole people of Iſrael, witneſs Moſes, witneſs David, witneſs Hezekiah, witneſs Manaſſeh, witneſs Nebuchadnezzar, witneſs Nineveh, witneſs that proſtitute, who wept in Simon's houſe, witneſs the poor publican, witneſs the converted thief, witneſs every penitent in this aſſembly, for what would become of you, I ſpeak of the holieſt of you, what would become of you, were not God good, were he not infinitely good, were he not mercifully to wait while we fall into ſin 'till we riſe again by repentance?

2. As *godly ſorrow* reconciles us to divine juſtice, ſo it reconciles us to our own *conſciences*. We ſometimes lull conſcience into a deep ſleep: but it is very difficult to keep it from ſtarting and awaking. Wo be to them, who throw it into a dead ſleep to wake no more! But how dreadful, when it awakes, does it ariſe from its ſleep! What blows does it ſtrike! What wounds does it make! What pains and horrors does it excite, when it ſays to a ſinner, Miſerable wretch! what haſt thou done? from what dignity art thou fallen! into what deep diſgrace and diſtreſs art thou plunged! *My puniſhment is greater, than I can bear! Mountains! cover me: Hills! fall upon me.* Ah! ye empty ſounds of worldly pleaſure! ye tumltuous aſſemblies! ye feſtal and amuſive ſcenes! how feeble are ye againſt an enemy ſo formidable! It is repentance only, it is only godly ſorrow, that can diſarm conſcience. A ſoul reconciled to God, a ſoul made to hear this comfortable language, *thy ſins be forgiven thee*, paſſeth, ſo to ſpeak, all on a ſudden from a kind

Gen. iv. 13. Hoſ. x. 8.

Mat. ix. 2.

SERM. IX. kind of hell to a ſort of heaven; it feels that *peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding*; it enters into that *joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, which hath ſupported the greateſt ſaints under the moſt infamous calumnies, that ever were invented to blacken them, and the ſharpeſt puniſhments, that ever were deviſed to torment them.

Phil. iv. 7. 1 Pet. i. 8.

3. In fine, *godly ſorrow* reconciles us to *death*. While we live without repentance, yea while there remains any doubt of the ſincerity or truth of our repentance, how can we ſuſtain the thoughts of a juſt tribunal, an exact regiſter, an impartial ſentence, all ready to unfold and decree our future fate? How can we hear this ſummons, *Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip?* *Godly ſorrow* reconciles us to this enemy, *the ſting of death is ſin*, and ſin has no ſting for a penitent. Death appears to the repenting ſinner as a meſſenger of grace, ſent to conduct him to a merciful God, and to open to him ineffable felicity flowing from boundleſs mercy.

Luke xvi. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 56.

Ah! my brethren, would to God it were as eaſy to prove, that ye bear the marks of true repentance, as it is to diſplay its prerogatives! But alas! . . . I dare not even move this queſtion . . . And yet what wait ye around the pulpit for? Why came ye to hear this ſermon? Would ye have me cloſe the ſolemnity as uſual by ſuppoſing that ye have underſtood all, and referred all to the true deſign; that laſt week ye all very ſeriouſly examined your own hearts; that ye all prepared yourſelves for the table of the Lord by adopting ſuch diſpoſitions as this holy ceremony requires of you; that this morning ye all received the communion with ſuch zeal, fervour, and love as characteriſe worthy communicants; that in the preceding exerciſe ye all poured your hearts before God in gratitude and praiſe; and that nothing remains now but to congratulate you on the holineſs and happineſs of your ſtate?

But

But tell me, in what period of your lives, (I ſpeak not of you all, for thanks be to God, I ſee many true penitents in this aſſembly; men, who *ſhine as lights in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe nation*, and who may perhaps have obtained to day by the fervour of their zeal forbearance for all the reſt. But I ſpeak of a great number, and of them I aſk.) In what period of your lives were ye in poſſeſſion of all thoſe characters of *godly ſorrow*, of which we have been ſpeaking? SERM. IX. Phil. ii. 15.

Was it in your cloſet? What! that trifling examination, that rapid reading, thoſe ſuperficial regrets, thoſe haſty reſolutions, was this your courſe of repentance?

Was it in company? But what! that commerce with the world, in which ye were not diſtinguiſhed from other worldlings, and where after the example of your company ye put on their livery, and purſued their pleaſures, was this your courſe of repentance?

Was it at the table of Jeſus Chriſt? But what! thoſe communions, to which ye came rather to acquire by ſome ſlight exerciſes of devotion a right to commit more ſin, than to lament what ye had committed; thoſe communions, which ye concluded as indevoutly as ye began; thoſe communions, that produced no reformation in you as men of the world, members of the church, or of private families; thoſe communions, after which ye were as proud, as implacable, as ſordid, as voluptuous, as envious, as before; do theſe communions conſtitute the courſe of your repentance?

Perhaps, we may repent, when we are dying! What! a forced ſubmiſſion; an attention extorted in ſpite of ourſelves by the prayers and exhortations of a zealous miniſter; reſolutions inſpired by fear; can this be a ſafe courſe of repentance?

Ah! my brethren, it would be better to turn our hopes from the paſt; for paſt times offer only melancholy objects to moſt of us, and to confine our attention to future, or rather to the preſent moments, which

SERM. IX. afford us more agreeable objects of contemplation. O may the preſent proofs, the glorious proofs, which God gives us to day of his love, make everlaſting impreſſions upon our hearts and minds! May the ſacred table, of which we have this morning participated, be for ever before our eyes! May this object every where follow us, and may it every where protect us from all thoſe temptations, to which a future converſation with the world may expoſe us! May our prayers, our reſolutions, our oaths, never be effaced from our memories! May we renew our prayers, reſolutions, vows and oaths this moment with all our hearts! Let each of us cloſe this ſolemnity by ſaying, *Thou art my portion, O Lord! I have ſaid, that I would keep thy words! I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* I have ſworn to be more exact in all thy ſervice, more attentive to thy voice, more ſenſible to thine exhortations. And, to unite all my wiſhes in one, may that ſincerity, and integrity, with which we take this oath, be accompanied with all the divine aſſiſtance, which is neceſſary to enable us never, never to violate it. Amen! and Amen!

Pſal. cxix. 57. 106.

SER-

SERMON X.

ASSURANCE.

SERMON X.

ASSURANCE.

ROMANS viii. 38, 39.

I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

IT is a circumſtance of ſacred hiſtory well worthy of our reflections, my brethren, that Moſes and Joſhua, being yet, the one beyond Jordan, the other hardly on the frontiers of Paleſtine, diſpoſed of that country as if they had already ſubdued it. They made laws concerning kings, ſubjects, prieſts and levites; they diſtributed towns and provinces; and they deſcribed the boundaries of every tribe. It ſhould ſeem, their battles had been all fought and they had nothing remaining now but the pleaſure of enjoying the fruit of their victories. Yet war is uncertain, and the ſucceſs of one day does not always inſure the ſucceſs of the next. Hence the ancient proverb, *Let not him, that girdeth on his harneſs, boaſt himſelf, as he, that putteth it off.* 1 Kings xx. 11.

Certainly, my brethren, theſe leaders of the people of God would have been chargeable with raſhneſs, had they founded their hopes only on their own reſolution and courage, had they attacked their enemies only *with a ſword, and with a ſpear:* but they went *in the name of the Lord of hoſts, the God of the armies of Iſrael*; for he 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

had

SERM. X. had ſaid to them, *Ariſe, and go, for I do give this land to the children of Iſrael.* Reſting on theſe promiſes, and poſſeſſing that *faith*, which *is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not ſeen*, they thought themſelves in the land of promiſe; they taſted the milk and honey, and enjoyed all the privileges of it.

Joſh. i. 2. Heb. xi. 1.

Chriſtians, there is a greater diſtance between heaven and earth, than there was between the wilderneſs and the land of promiſe. There are more difficulties to ſurmount to arrive at ſalvation, than there were formerly to arrive at Canaan. Yet, my text is the language of a chriſtian ſoldier, yet in arms, yet reſiſting fleſh and blood, yet ſurrounded by innumerable enemies conſpiring againſt his ſoul; behold him aſſured, triumphing, defying all the creatures of the univerſe to deprive him of ſalvation. But, be not ſurprized at his firmneſs; the angel of the Lord fights for him, and ſays to him, *Ariſe, and go, for I do give the land to thee*; and his triumphant ſong is full of wiſdom, *I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

Joſh. i. 3.

Let us examine the ſtedfaſtneſs of S. Paul, and let the words of our text decide two diſputed points. Some divines pretend, that believers ought always to remain in a ſtate of doubt and uncertainty concerning their ſalvation. Our firſt diſpute is with them. Our ſecond is with ſome falſe chriſtians, who, pretending that aſſurance of ſalvation is taught in the holy ſcriptures, arrogate to themſelves the conſolations afforded by this doctrine, even while they live in practices inconſiſtent with a ſtate of regeneration. With a view to both, we will divide this diſcourſe into two general parts. In the firſt we will prove this propoſition; a believer may arrive at ſuch a degree of holineſs as to be aſſured of his ſalvation. *I am perſuaded*, ſays S. Paul; he does

does not ſay, I think, I preſume, I conjecture: but *I am perſuaded*, I am aſſured, *that neither death nor life ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* In the ſecond place, we will prove, that no one has a right to aſſure himſelf of his ſalvation, any farther than he hath a right to aſſure himſelf, that he ſhall perſevere in faith and obedience. *I am perſuaded*, of what? Is it that, live how I will, I ſhall be ſaved? No. But *I am perſuaded, that neither death nor life ſhall ſeparate me from the love of God*; that is to ſay, *I am perſuaded, I ſhall triumph over all temptations.* The firſt of theſe articles ſhall be directed to confirm our conſciences, and to explain our divinity. The ſecond to juſtify our morality, and to deſtroy that falſe ſyſtem of confidence, which carnal ſecurity aims to eſtabliſh. SERM. X.

I. A believer may carry his faith and holineſs to a degree, which will aſſure him of his ſalvation. This is our firſt propoſition, and there is as much neceſſity of explaining it clearly as of ſolidly proving the truth of it; for if there be an article, that is rendered obſcure by diſputes about words, and by the falſe conſequences, which different authors impute to each other, it is certainly this. If we clearly ſtate the queſtion, and omit what is not eſſential to the ſubject, although it may have ſome diſtant relation to it, we ſhall preclude a great many difficulties, and the truth will eſtabliſh itſelf.

Firſt, then, when we affirm, there is ſuch a bleſſing as aſſurance of ſalvation, we do not mean, that aſſurance is a duty impoſed on all mankind, ſo that every one, in what ſtate ſoever he may be, ought to be fully perſuaded of his ſalvation, and by this perſuaſion to begin his chriſtianity. We are well aſſured, that all thoſe, who are out of the road of truth and virtue, can have no other aſſurance, than what is falſe, raſh, and injurious to religion. By this we get rid of all thoſe calumnies, by which ſome attempt to blacken our doctrine.

SERM. X. trine. It has been pretended, that we require falſe chriſtians, wicked and abandoned people, perſiſting in error and vice, to believe, that they are juſtified, and that they have nothing more to do in order to arrive at ſalvation than to perſuade themſelves, that they ſhall be ſaved. Indeed, we allow, obligations to faith and holineſs, by which we arrive at aſſurance, lie upon all men, even the moſt unbelieving and profane: but while they perſiſt in unbelief and profaneneſs, we endeavour to deſtroy their pretences to aſſurance and ſalvation.

2. We do not affirm, that all chriſtians, even they, who may be ſincere chriſtians, but of whoſe ſincerity there may be ſome doubt, have a right to aſſurance. Aſſurance of our juſtification depends on aſſurance of our bearing the characters of juſtified perſons. As a chriſtian in his ſtate of infancy and noviciate can have only mixed and doubtful evidences of his chriſtianity, ſo he can have only mixed and doubtful evidences of his certainty of ſalvation. In this manner we reply to thoſe, who reproach us with opening a broad way to heaven not authorized by the word of God.

3. Leſs ſtill do we affirm, that they, who for a conſiderable time ſeemed to give great proof of their faith and love, but who have ſince fallen back into ſin, and ſeem as if they would continue in it for the remaining part of life, ought in virtue of their former apparent acts of piety to perſuade themſelves, that they ſhall be ſaved. Far from pretending that theſe people ought to arrogate to themſelves the prerogatives of true believers, we affirm, they were never partakers of the firſt principles of true religion, according to this ſaying of an apoſtle, *If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* In this manner we reply to the difficulties, which ſome paſſages of ſcripture ſeem to raiſe againſt our doctrine; as this of S. Paul, *It is impoſſible for thoſe, who were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the holy Ghoſt, if they ſhall fall away, to renew them again to repentance.*

1 John ii. 19.

Heb. vi. 4, 6.

And

And this of the prophet, *When the righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations, that the wicked man doeth, ſhall he live? All his righteouſneſs, that he hath done, ſhall not be mentioned, in his treſpaſs ſhall he die.* SERM. X. Ezek. xviii. 24.

4. We do not ſay, that they, who have arrived at the higheſt degree of faith and holineſs, can be perſuaded of the certainty of their ſalvation in every period of their lives. Piety, even the piety of the moſt eminent ſaints, is ſometimes under an eclipſe. Conſequently, aſſurance, which piety alone can produce, muſt be ſubject to eclipſes too. Thus we anſwer objections taken from ſuch caſes as that of David. After he had killed Uriah, he was given up to continual remorſe, the ſhade of Uriah all covered with gore for ever haunted him, *broke his bones*, and made him cry moſt earneſtly for a *reſtoration of the joy of ſalvation*. In ſome ſuch circumſtances the prophet Aſaph was, when he exclaimed, *Will the Lord caſt off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies?* Theſe were moments of ſuſpenſion of divine love; theſe were the ſad remains of ſin in theſe holy men. Pſal. li. 8, 12. lxxvii. 7, 9.

5. We do not ſay, that the greateſt ſaints have any right to perſuade themſelves of the certainty of their ſalvation, in caſe they were to ceaſe to love God. Certainty of ſalvation ſuppoſes perſeverance in the way of ſalvation. Thus we reply to objections taken from the words of S. Paul, *I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt that by any means when I have preached to others I myſelf ſhould be a caſt away.* We are perſuaded, S. Paul, all holy as he was, had he ceaſed to have been holy, would have been obliged to doubt of his ſalvation. Thus alſo we account for the threatnings, which are denounced in ſcripture, and for this command of an apoſtle, *Give diligence to make your calling and election ſure.* And by this alſo we get rid of the 1 Cor. ix. 27. 2 Pet. i. 10.

SERM. X. unjuſt reproaches, which ſome caſt on the doctrine of aſſurance, as favouring indolence and licentiouſneſs.

6. We do not affirm, that any man, conſidered in himſelf, employing only his own ſtrength, and unaſſiſted grace, can hope to perſevere in holineſs. We ſuppoſe the chriſtian aſſiſted by the power of God, without which no man can begin the work of ſalvation, much leſs finiſh it. Thus our doctrine frees itſelf from raſhneſs and preſumption.

7. We do not pretend to affirm, that doubts exclude men from ſalvation. Faith may be ſincere, where it is not ſtrong. All the children of Abraham are not like Abraham *fully perſuaded.* Rom. iv. 6.

Finally, while we maintain the doctrine of aſſurance, we wiſh to have it diſtinguiſhed from the doctrine of perſeverance. It is a doctrine of our churches, once a child of God and always a child of God. But, although theſe two doctrines ſeem to be cloſely connected together; although the ſame arguments, which eſtabliſh the one, may be of uſe to prove the other; yet there is a conſiderable difference between the two. We are not conſidering to day ſo much the *condition* of a chriſtian, as the *judgment*, which he ought to make of it. Let it not ſurprize you then, if, while we preſs home the article of aſſurance, we do not ſpeak much on the faithfulneſs of God in his promiſes, or the irrevocable nature of his eternal decrees; for we are not enquiring in this diſcourſe, whether the promiſes of God be faithful, or whether his decrees be inviolable: but whether we can arrive at a perſuaſion of our own intereſt in theſe promiſes, and whether we be included in the eternal decrees of his love. Our queſtion is not, May true believers fall away into endleſs perdition? but, Have we any evidence, that we are among the number of thoſe ſaints, who can never periſh?

Theſe elucidations and diſtinctions are ſufficient at preſent. Were we to compoſ a treatiſe on the ſubject,

it

it would be neceſſary to explain each article more fully: but in a ſingle ſermon, they can only be juſt mentioned. Theſe hints, we hope, are ſufficient to give you a clear ſtate of the queſtion, and a juſt notion of the doctrine of our churches. We do not ſay, every man, but a believer; not every pretended believer, but a true believer; not a believer in a ſtate of infancy and noviciate, but a confirmed believer; not a believer who backſlides from his profeſſion, but one, who perſeveres; not a believer during his falls into ſin, but in the ordinary courſe of his life; not a believer conſidered in himſelf, and left to his own efforts, but a believer ſupported by that divine aid, which God never refuſes to thoſe, who aſk it; ſuch a believer, we ſay, may *perſuade* himſelf, not only that the promiſes of God are faithful, and that his decrees are irrevocable, but that he is of the number of thoſe, whom faithful promiſes and immutable decrees ſecure. Not that we pretend to exclude from ſalvation thoſe, who have not obtained the higheſt degree of aſſurance: but we conſider it as a ſtate, to which each chriſtian ought to aſpire, a privilege, that every one ſhould endeavour to obtain. It is not enough to advance this propoſition, we muſt endeavour to eſtabliſh it on ſolid proof. SERM. X.

We adduce in proof of this article, firſt, the experience of holy men; next, the nature of regeneration; then, the privileges of a chriſtian; and laſtly, the teſtimony of the holy ſpirit; each of which we will briefly explain.

1. We alledge the *experience* of holy men. A long liſt of men perſuaded of their ſalvation might here be given. A few follow. Job ſays, *I know that my redeemer liveth, and though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God, whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf.* David ſays, *O Lord, deliver my ſoul from men of the world, who have their portion in this life. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteouſneſs, I ſhall be ſatisfied when I awake with thy likeneſs.* So Aſaph, *It is my* xix. 25, 26, 27. Pſal. xvii. 14, 15.

SERM. X. *happineſs to draw near to God. I am continually with thee, thou haſt holden me by my right hand. Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterward receive me to glory.* But not to multiply examples, let us content ourſelves with the words of the text, and, in order to feel the force of them, let us explain them.

Pſalm lxxiii. 23, 24. 28.

I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. What is this *love of God*, of which our apoſtle ſpeaks? The expreſſion is equivocal. It either ſignifies, the love of Jeſus Chriſt to us, or our love to him. Both come to the ſame; for as S. Paul could not perſuade himſelf that God would always love him, without at the ſame time aſſuring himſelf that he ſhould always love God; nor that he ſhould always love God, without perſuading himſelf that God would always love him; ſo it is indifferent which ſenſe we take, for in either ſenſe the apoſtle means by *the love of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, his communion with God through Jeſus Chriſt. What does he ſay of this communion? He ſays, he is *perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate it.* This enumeration includes all, and leaves no room for addition. In effect, what are the moſt formidable enemies, that conſpire againſt our ſouls?

Are they the ſophiſms, with which Satan gives a gloſs to error? There is an art of enveloping the truth; there is a ſuperficial glare, that may render falſe religions probable, and may dazzle the eyes of enquirers. S. Paul defies not only the moſt accompliſhed teachers, and the moſt refined ſophiſts: but the very devils alſo, *neither angels*, ſays he, that is, fallen angels.

Are they the diſſipations of life, which by filling all the capacity of the ſoul, often deprive it of the liberty

of

of working out its ſalvation? or are they the approaches of death, the gloom of which intercepts the light and obſcures the rays of the Sun of righteouſneſs? S. Paul is ſuperior to both, *neither death, nor life*, ſays he. SERM. X.

Are they worldly pomps and grandeurs? A certain love of elevation, inſeparable from our minds, prejudiceth us in favour of whatever preſents itſelf to us under the idea of grandeur. S. Paul dares all the pomps, and all the potentates in the world, *neither principalities, nor powers, nor height*, adds he.

Are the impreſſions, that preſent objects always make on us, enemies to us? The idea of a preſent benefit weighs much with us. The ſacrifice of the preſent to the future is the moſt difficult of all the efforts of our hearts. S. Paul knows the art of rendering preſent objects future, and of annihilating the preſent, if I may venture to ſay ſo, by placing it in future proſpect; *neither things preſent, nor things to come.*

Are they the moſt cruel torments? How difficult is it to reſiſt pain! In violent ſenſations of pain the ſoul itſelf retires into concealment, and ſurrounded with excruciating maladies can ſcarcely ſupport itſelf by reflection. S. Paul can reſiſt all torments, *diſtreſs and perſecution, famine and nakedneſs, peril and ſword.* ver. 35.

Is contempt an enemy? Many, who have withſtood all other trials, have ſunk under that unjuſt ſcandal, which often covers the children of God in this world. S. Paul entertained rectified ideas of glory, and found grandeur in the deepeſt abaſement, when religion reduced him to it. *Neither*, ſays he, *ſhall depth be able to ſeparate. I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth*; and, leſt the imperfection of his enumeration ſhould excite any ſuſpicion concerning his perſeverance, he adds, *nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

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SERM. X. In vain will it be objected, that this aſſurance was grounded on ſome extraordinary revelation, and on ſome privileges peculiar to the apoſtles; for it is clear, by the preceding verſes, that the apoſtle grounds his aſſurance of ſalvation on promiſes made to all the church. On this account ſome duties are enjoined on all chriſtians, which ſuppoſe, that all chriſtians may arrive at this aſſurance; theſe duties are thankſgiving, joy, and hope. Nothing, then, can invalidate our arguments drawn from the examples of holy men. Thus the queſtion of aſſurance is not a queſtion of right, ſubject to objections and difficulties; it is a queſtion of fact, explained by an event, and decided by experience.

2. Let us attend to the nature of *regeneration*. A regenerate man is not one, who lightly determines his choice of a religion; he is not *a child toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine:* but he is a man, who hath ſtudied chriſtianity, weighed its arguments, ſeen its evidences, and felt all their force, ſo that he is perſuaded by demonſtration, that there is a God, a providence, another life, a judgment, a heaven, a hell, and ſo on.

Eph. iv. 14.

A regenerate man is one, who, by continual meditations and pious actions, hath ſurmounted his natural propenſities to ſin. He is a man, whoſe conſtitution, ſo to ſpeak, is new-caſt and refined, ſo that, inſtead of being inwardly carried away to ſin by his own violent paſſions, he is inwardly moved to the practice of piety and virtue.

A regenerate man is one, who in pious exerciſes hath experienced that ſatisfaction, which a rational mind taſtes, when inward conſciouſneſs atteſts a harmony between deſtiny and duty. He is a man, who hath felt *that peace, which paſſeth all underſtanding, that joy unſpeakable, and full of glory*, which the preſence of God produceth in the ſoul. He is a man, whoſe life hath abounded with thoſe happy periods, in which the ſoul loſes ſight of the world, holds communion with its God,

Phil. iv. 7. 1 Pet. i. 8.

God, foretaſtes eternal felicity, finds itſelf, as S. Paul expreſſeth it, *raiſed up from the dead, and made to ſit in heavenly places with Chriſt Jeſus.* SERM. X. Eph. ii. 6.

A regenerate man is one, who hath meditated on the attributes of God, on his wiſdom, his omnipreſence, and his juſtice, and particularly on thoſe depths of mercy, which inclined him to redeem a fallen world, and to ranſom it by a ſacrifice, the bare idea of which confounds imagination, and abſorbs all thought.

A regenerate man is one, whoſe own ideas of God have produced love to him, a love the more fervent becauſe it is founded on his own perfections and excellencies, a *love ſtrong as death, a love that many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown.* Cant. viii. 6, 7.

This is a fair account of a regenerate man. Now, it is certain, ſuch a man has a right to be perſuaded, that he ſhall triumph over all his temptations; he may ſay, *I am perſuaded, that no creature ſhall ſeparate me from the love of God.*

Let us conſider things at the worſt with this man. It may happen to him, that a complex ſophiſm, or an ingenious objection, may for a moment becloud his faith, and excite ſome doubt in his mind: but as we ſuppoſe him enlightened, guarded, and grounded in the truth, it is impoſſible his perſuaſion of theſe great truths, truths ſo well underſtood and eſtabliſhed, ſhould ever be totally effaced from his mind.

Indeed, it may happen, that ſuch a man through a revolt of his ſenſes, or a revolution of his ſpirits, may fall into ſome exceſſes: but as his conſtitutional turn is reformed, his propenſity to ſin ſurmounted, and his habits of piety eſtabliſhed, it is impoſſible he ſhould not know, that his ſenſes and ſpirits will return to their uſual calm.

It may happen, that ſuch a man through the allurement of a preſent pleaſure, through the inticement of a temptation, through the falſe attractives of the world, may for a few moments be impoſed on, and betrayed away:

SERM. X. away: but a remembrance of the pleaſures of piety, a contraſt between them and the pleaſures of the world, will ſoon recover him to ſuch religious exerciſes as before gave him real pleaſure and pure joy.

Remark here, that by propoſing this reaſoning we have granted our opponents all, which they can reaſonably require; we have placed things at the worſt. But, including all our ideas, we affirm, the principles of regeneration are ſuch, that he, who poſſeſſeth them, will not only riſe from his falls, ſhould he ſometimes fall into ſin under violent temptations: but he will avail himſelf of theſe very temptations to confirm his faith and obedience. The ſame objects produce different effects, according to the different diſpoſitions of the perſons, to whom they are offered. What ſerves to confirm a wicked man in ſin, ſerves to confirm a good man in virtue, and, if he has fallen, to reclaim him to God.

Propoſe to a regenerate man the moſt artful ſophiſm of error, he will take occaſion from it to attach himſelf more earneſtly to the ſtudy of truth; he will increaſe his knowledge, and he will never find a more ſincere attachment to religion than after diſcovering the nullity of the objections, that are made againſt it. Surround him with worldly pomp, it will elevate his mind to that glory, which God hath reſerved for his children in the other world. Put him in a ſtate of meanneſs and miſery, it will detach him from the world, and enliven him in ſearching felicity in another life. Lay him on a death-bed, even there he will triumph over all. The veils, that concealed the ſupreme good from him, will begin to fall in pieces, and he will become inflamed with the deſire of poſſeſſing it. Suppoſe him even fallen into ſin, an experience of his frailty will animate him to vigilance; he will hereafter doubly guard the weak paſſes of his ſoul; and thus he will gain by his loſſes, and triumph in his very defeats.

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It is too little to ſay, *No creature ſhall ſeparate him from the love of God*; all creatures ſhall ſerve to unite him more cloſely to his Lord. Thus S. Paul ſays, *All things work together for good to them, that love God; in all things we are more than conquerors through him, that loved us.* Obſerve theſe expreſſions, not only nothing can hurt a true believer: but *all things work together for his good*; not only, we are conquerors: but we are *more than conquerors through him, that loved us.* Nothing is hyperbolical here. Every thing actually contributes to the ſalvation of a believer. In this ſenſe *all are his, Paul, Cephas, and the world.* In this ſenſe he *ſpoileth principalities and powers*, and, like his Saviour, *makes a ſhew of them openly.* And this is a reaſon for a believer's continual joy, becauſe, in whatever circumſtances providence may place him, all conduct him to the one great end. Were his chief aim health, ſickneſs would deprive him of it; were it elevation, meanneſs would thwart him; were it riches, poverty would counteract his deſign: but as his chief aim is ſalvation, all things, ſickneſs and health, majeſty and meanneſs, poverty and riches, all contribute to his ſalvation. *I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. All things work together for good to them, that love God. We are more than conquerors through him, that hath loved us.*

Rom. viii. 28. 37.

1 Cor. iii. 22.

Col. ii. 15.

The *prerogatives* of a chriſtian afford a third claſs of arguments for aſſurance of ſalvation. This appears by two propoſitions. A chriſtian may know, that he hath a true faith. When a perſon is perſuaded, that he hath a true faith, he may aſſure himſelf of obtaining aſſiſtance to perſevere, and conſequently of arriving at ſalvation.

The firſt propoſition is inconteſtible. True faith hath proper characters. It conſiſts in ſome ideas of the mind, in ſome diſpoſitions of heart, and in ſome

SERM. X. actions of life, each of which may be deſcribed, if not with facility, yet with certainty, when the laws of ſelf-examination are obeyed. The ſcripture puts theſe words into the mouths of true believers: *We know that we have paſſed from death unto life; we know that we are of the truth, and ſhall aſſure our hearts before him.* Agreeably to which S. Paul ſays, *Hold faſt the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. Examine yourſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own-ſelves; know ye not your ownſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

1 John iii. 14. 19.

Heb. iii. 6.

2 Cor. xiii. 5.

Here lies the difficulty; I have faith to day, how can I aſſure myſelf that I ſhall have it to morrow? I am ſure to day; I am in a ſtate of grace, how can I be ſure I ſhall be ſo to morrow? Our ſecond propoſition is intended to remove this difficulty. When we are ſure faith is true and genuine, we may be ſure of aſſiſtance to perſevere. We ground this on the privileges of true faith. One of theſe is the pardon of all the ſins, that we have committed in the whole courſe of our lives, provided we repent. *If any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our ſins.* A ſecond privilege is the acceptance of ſincerity inſtead of perfection, *A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking flax ſhall be not quench.* Another privilege is ſupernatural grace to ſupport us under trials, *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all men liberally.* One privilege is the connection of all benefits with the one great gift, *God who ſpared not his own ſon, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Another privilege is the gift of perſeverance, *I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they ſhall be my people. I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do them.* Another privilege is an intereſt in the interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, which God never rejects.

1 John ii. 1.

Mat. xii. 20.

James i. 5.

Rom. viii. 32.

Jer. xxxi. 33.

Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

Simon,

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired to have you, that he may ſift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. Holy Father! keep through thine own name thoſe, whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one, as we are. Neither pray I for theſe alone: but for them alſo, which ſhall believe on me through their word. I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. Theſe privileges, in a word, conſiſt in being *loved* of God *unto the end*, having been loved from *the beginning*, and in receiving from God *gifts and calling without repentance.* SERM. X. Luke xxii. 31, 32. John xvii. 11. 20. xiv. 16. xiii. 1. Rom. xi. 29.

Do not attempt, then, to overwhelm me with a ſenſe of my own frailty and ſin. Do not alledge my natural levity and inconſtancy. Do not oppoſe againſt me the rapid moments, in which my paſſions ſport with my real happineſs, and change me in an inſtant from hatred to love, and from love to hatred again. Do not produce, in the ſad hiſtory of my life, the mortifying liſt of ſo many reſolutions forgotten, ſo many unreal plans, ſo many abortive deſigns. The edifice of my ſalvation is proof againſt all viciſſitudes; it is in the hand of him, who changeth not, who is *the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.* To him I commit the preſervation of it; becauſe I am a chriſtian, and becauſe it is the privilege of a chriſtian to ſay, according to the beautiful expreſſion of S. Paul, *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded, that he is able to keep that, which I have committed unto him againſt that day.* Heb. xiii. 8. 2 Tim. i. 12.

Finally, the *inward teſtimony of the Spirit of God* puts the doctrine of aſſurance out of all doubt. We propoſe this argument with trembling, ſo exceſſively has human fancy abuſed it! Enthuſiaſm defiles the church of God. The world, always fantaſtick, and full of viſionary ſchemes, ſeems now a days to be ſuperannuated. We almoſt every where meet with, what ſhall I call them? weak heads, or wicked hearts, who, being deſtitute of ſolid reaſons to eſtabliſh their reveries, im-

SERM. X. pute them to the ſpirit of God, and ſo charge eternal truth with fabulous tales, that make reaſon bluſh, and which are unworthy of the meaneſt of mankind.

It is true, however, that the believer hath in his heart a teſtimony of the ſpirit of God, which aſſures him of his ſalvation; and the abuſe of this doctrine ought not to prevent a ſober uſe of it. This teſtimony is a kind of demonſtration ſuperior to all thoſe of the ſchools. It is an argument unknown to philoſophers, and ſupreme wiſdom is the author of it. It is a lively apprehenſion of our ſalvation excited in our hearts by God himſelf. It is a powerful application of our mind to every thing, that can prove us in a ſtate of grace. It is an effect of that ſupreme power, which ſound reaſon attributes to God over the ſenſations of our ſouls, and according to which he can excite, as he pleaſes, joy or ſorrow. It is a chriſtian right founded on ſcripture promiſes. *The love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghoſt, which is given unto us. Ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The ſpirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God. He, which ſtabliſheth us with you in Chriſt, is God; who hath alſo ſealed us, and given the earneſt of the ſpirit in our hearts. Hereby we know, that he abideth in us, by the ſpirit which he hath given us. To him that overcometh, will I give a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, which no man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth it.* We ſee the glorious effects of theſe promiſes in ſome believers, who, although they live in meanneſs and indigence, enjoy ſuch pleaſures as all the riches and grandeurs of the world cannot give. We ſee the effects of them in ſome dying perſons, who, at the ſight of death, experience conſolations, which change their beds of ſickneſs into fields of victory and triumph. We ſee them, again, in many martyrs, who are happier

Rom. v. 5. viii. 15, 16. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. 1 John iii. 24. Rev. ii. 17.

pier on racks and burning piles than tyrants on their thrones, environed with all the poſſible pomp of a court. SERM. X.

Such are the arguments, which eſtabliſh the doctrine of aſſurance. But, ſhall I tell you, my brethren, a thought, that has run in my mind all the time of this exerciſe? In our general preaching, we fear, our arguments may ſeem inconcluſive, and may but half convince our auditors. In this diſcourſe, we have been afraid, they would appear too convincing, and carry the ſubject beyond our intention. Each hearer will perhaps indiſcreetly arrogate to himſelf the particular privileges of believers. Having, therefore, preached the doctrine, it is neceſſary to guard you againſt the abuſe of it by a few precautions. Having proved, that there is a well-grounded aſſurance, it is neceſſary to attack ſecurity, and to ſhew, that the conſolations, which reſult from our doctrine, belong to the real chriſtian only, and are privileges to which unregenerate perſons, yea even they, whoſe regeneration is uncertain, ought not to pretend. We will not produce new objects, we will conſider the articles, that have been already conſidered, in a new point of light; for what ſerves to eſtabliſh true confidence ſerves at the ſame time to deſtroy carnal ſecurity. We have been convinced, that a believer may aſſure himſelf of his ſalvation by four arguments, by the experiences of holy men, by the nature of regeneration, by the prerogatives of a chriſtian, and by the teſtimony of the holy ſpirit. Theſe four arguments ſupport what we juſt now affirmed; that aſſurance is a privilege, to which unregenerate men, and ſuſpected chriſtians, have no right, and thus the ſophiſms of ſin demonſtrate the neceſſity of vigilance.

II. The firſt argument, that eſtabliſheth the aſſurance of a believer, the firſt argument, which we employ againſt the carnal ſecurity of a ſinner, is the experience of the ſaints. Of all ſophiſtical ways of reaſoning,

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ing, is there one, that can compare with this? Job, a model of patience, who adored God under all his afflictions, was perſuaded of his ſalvation; therefore I, who rage under trials, who would, if it were poſſible, deprive God of the empire of the world, which he ſeems to me to govern partially and unjuſtly, I may perſuade myſelf of my ſalvation. David, *a man after God's own heart*; David, whoſe whole *delight was in the law of the Lord*, was perſuaded of his ſalvation; therefore I, whoſe every devotional exerciſe ſavours of nothing but languor and lukewarmneſs, I, who can hardly drag myſelf to hear the word of God, I may perſuade myſelf of my ſalvation. S. Paul, that wiſe proſelyte, that zealous miniſter, that bleeding martyr, was perſuaded of his ſalvation; therefore I, who profeſs the religion in which I was educated, without knowing why. . . . . it is hardly worth while to refute theſe unnatural and inconcluſive conſequences.

1 Sam. xiii. 14. Pſal. i. 2.

Farther, theſe eminent ſaints not only avoided grounding their aſſurance of ſalvation on your principles; but they were perſuaded, if they lived as ye live, they ſhould be conſigned to deſtruction. What ſaid Job on this article? *Let me be weighed in an even balance. If I did deſpiſe the cauſe of my man-ſervant, or of my maid-ſervant, if I have withheld the poor from their deſire, or have cauſed the eyes of the widow to fail; If I have made gold my hope, or have ſaid to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; what then ſhall I do, when God riſeth up? and when he viſiteth, what ſhall I anſwer him?* That is to ſay, If he had practiſed any of the vices, or neglected any of the virtues, which he enumerated, God would have rejected him. This, now, is your caſe; you are haughty towards your inferiors; if not cruel, yet ſtrait-handed to the poor; gold is your god; and, conſequently, if your ideas of aſſurance be regulated by theſe of Job, you ought not to perſuade yourſelf of your ſalvation. What ſays S. Paul? *I keep under my body,*

xxxi. 6. 13. 16. 24. 14. 1 Cor. ix. 27.

body, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt that by any means when I have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away. That is to ſay, S. Paul was perſuaded, if he relaxed his piety, if he were not to account all he had done nothing, if he were not to attend to what remained to be done, God would reject him. This is your caſe; you live a life of ſecurity and indolence, and making all your vocation conſiſt in a bare avoiding of notorious crimes, you do not even ſee the neceſſity of making a progreſs in holineſs: conſequently, if you regulate your ideas of aſſurance of ſalvation on theſe of S. Paul, you ought not to pretend to be ſure of being ſaved. SERM. X.

Moreover, when theſe eminent ſaints fell by ſudden ſurprize into thoſe ſins, in which nominal chriſtians coolly and deliberately perſiſt, they did not imagine, that a recollection of former virtue, or even of that faith and piety, the ſeeds of which none of their falls eradicated, was a ſufficient ground of ſolid peace and joy. They complained, they had loſt the *joy of ſalvation*, and under ſuch complaints they continued till they were reſtored to communion with God, and till by reciprocal acts of love they were convinced, ſin was pardoned. But if theſe ſaints, in ſome ſingle improper actions reaſoned thus; what ought to be the diſpoſitions of thoſe, who conſume their whole lives in vicious habits? Pſal. li. 14.

Let us add one word more. What mean theſe words of my text, of which falſe chriſtians make ſuch a criminal abuſe? *I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, ſhall ſeparate.* Does this text mean to affirm, if a man begin to ſurmount temptation, he ſhall be infallibly ſaved, although he ceaſe to reſiſt, and temptations prevail over him in the end? The words mean the direct contrary. S. Paul promiſes himſelf, that he ſhall always believe, not that he ſhall be ſaved if he fall into infidelity; that he ſhall always reſiſt ſin, as far as human

SERM. X. human frailty will allow; not that he ſhall be ſaved, if ſin triumph over him. *I am perſuaded, death ſhall not ſeparate me from the love of God*; that is to ſay, the love of God hath ſtruck ſuch deep root in my ſoul, that death can not eradicate my love to him. *I am perſuaded, life ſhall not ſeparate me from the love of God*; that is, the love of God hath ſtruck ſuch deep root in my ſoul, that all the charms of life can never prevent my loving him. *I am perſuaded, angels ſhall not ſeparate me from the love of God*; that is to ſay, the love of God hath ſtruck ſuch deep root in my ſoul, that I defy all the power and policy of wicked angels to prevent my loving him. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword?* that is to ſay, the love of God hath made impreſſions on our ſouls ſo deep, that ſhould he cauſe us to ſuffer the moſt cruel perſecutions, ſhould he command us to die with hunger, ſhould we be ſlaughtered for his ſake, we would not ceaſe to love him. Theſe are the ſentiments of S. Paul in the text, and in the preceding verſes. But ye, whom death and life, angels, principalities, and powers, ſeparate every day from loving God, what right have ye to ſay, We are *perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, ſhall ſeparate us from the love of God?*

I freely own, my brethren, I have not patience to hear nominal chriſtians, unregenerate perſons, appropriate to themſelves the words and ſentiments of eminent ſaints. If this abuſe be deplorable through life, is it not moſt of all ſo at the hour of death? We often hear people, whoſe whole lives have been ſpent in ſin, ſpeak the very language of others, whoſe whole days have been devoted to virtue. One ſays with S. Paul, *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs.* But who are you talking thus? Do you know who uttered theſe words? Do you know who S. Paul was? He was a man filled with divine

2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

love

love; a man burning with love to the church; a man inviolably attached to all the rights of God and men. But you, who ſell juſtice for a bribe; you, who ſtain the character of every neighbour; you, who exerciſe a faithleſs miniſtry; do you adopt the ſtyle of this apoſtle? Inſtead of ſaying, *I have fought the good fight*, you ought to ſay, I have fought a bad fight; inſtead of ſaying, *I have kept the faith*, you ought to ſay, I have betrayed the faith; inſtead of ſaying, *I have finiſhed my courſe*, you ought to ſay, I have not yet begun to ſet a ſtep in it; inſtead of ſaying, *A crown of righteouſneſs is laid up for me*, you ought to ſay, There are laid up for me chains of darkneſs, I am on the brink of hell, and I am looking, my God, whether there be any poſſible way of eſcaping it. But to ſay, with S. Paul, *I am perſuaded*, a man muſt be, if not in degree, at leaſt in ſincerity and truth, a ſaint as S. Paul was. SERM. X.

A ſecond argument, which eſtabliſhes the doctrine of aſſurance, and deſtroys a ſyſtem of carnal ſecurity, is the nature of regeneration. Recollect the reaſons aſſigned before to ſhew, that a confirmed chriſtian might perſuade himſelf, he ſhould triumph over all his trials; theſe reaſons all prove, that unregenerate men, and ſuſpected chriſtians, have juſt grounds of fear. An unregenerate man hath only a few tranſient acts of virtue, and he hath paid very little attention to the mortification of his natural propenſities to ſin; conſequently he ought to fear, that habits of vice, and inward propenſities to ſin, will carry his ſuperficial virtue away. An unregenerate man hath very little apprehenſion of the joy of ſalvation, conſequently he ought to dread the influence of ſenſual pleaſures. An unregenerate man hath but a few ſeeming ſparks of divine love, and if he think them real, he ought to fear the extinction of them. A light ſo faint, a ſpark ſo ſmall, are not likely amidſt ſo many obſtacles to continue long.

SERM. X. This fear is the more reaſonable, becauſe the church abounds with nominal chriſtians, who, after a ſhining profeſſion of piety and ſanctity, have forſaken truth and
xviii. 24. virtue. We have ſeen *righteous men turn away from their righteouſneſs*, as the prophet Ezekiel expreſſeth it. We have ſeen temporary profeſſors, who, after they
Mat. xiii. 20, 21. have *received the word with joy*, have been *offended when perſecution aroſe*, as Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks. We have ſeen
2 Tim. ii. 17. ſuch as Hymeneus and Philetus, who have made *ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience*, as S. Paul words it. We have ſeen ſome like Demas, after they have ad-
iv. 10. hered awhile to the truth, *forſake it, having loved this preſent world*, as the ſame apoſtle ſpeaks. We have
2 Eph. ii. 20. ſeen people, *after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, again entangled therein; and overcome*, as S. Peter ſays. We have ſeen chriſtians in appearance of
Heb. vi. 4. the higheſt order, *who, after they had been once enlightened, and had taſted of the heavenly gift, and had taſted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come*, fell *away*. We have ſeen Judaſſes, who, after they had been in the ſacred college of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhamefully betrayed him. While our knowledge is ſo ſmall, and our virtue ſo feeble, we have great reaſon to apply theſe examples, and to tremble for ourſelves.

The third argument, by which we eſtabliſhed the doctrine of aſſurance, and which alſo militates againſt carnal ſecurity, is chriſtian prerogative. Two propoſitions are contained in it. Firſt, we may be perſuaded, that we have true faith. Next, we may be ſure, true faith will be aſſiſted to perſevere. Theſe propoſitions, which aſſure the believer, ought to alarm a nominal chriſtian.

Here let us develop an ambiguity too common in our churches. For as we affirm, on the one ſide, that a believer hath characters proper to himſelf, and by which he may determine his ſtate; and as, on the other ſide,

ſide, we aſſert, that they, who have theſe characters, can never ceaſe to be true believers; a nominal chriſtian may imagine the following ſophiſm. I faſt, I pray, I give alms; theſe are the virtues of a believer; I may, then, perſuade myſelf, that I am a believer. Now, it ſeems, he, who once becomes a true believer, can never ceaſe to believe; conſequently I, who have faſted, prayed, and given alms, can never ceaſe to be a believer. SERM. X.

What is ſtill more aſtoniſhing, this ridiculous reaſoning is often applied to others, as well as to ourſelves. A looſe caſuiſt aſks his penitent, Do you repent of your ſins? The penitent anſwers, I do repent. Have you recourſe to the divine clemency? The penitent replies, I have recourſe to it. Do you embrace the ſatisfaction of Chriſt? The penitent ſays, I do embrace it. On this ſlight foundation our caſuiſt builds his ſyſtem. Publications of grace are laviſhed, ſources of mercy pour forth in abundance, and the penitent may, if he pleaſe, take his ſeat in heaven. My God! In what a manner they enter into the ſpirit of thy goſpel!

But firſt, when we affirm, that only the true believer can perform acts of faith, and that the leaſt good work ſuppoſes regeneration: we do not affirm, that there are not many actions common to both real and nominal chriſtians. A nominal chriſtian may pray; a nominal chriſtian may faſt, a nominal chriſtian may give alms. It may even happen, that men may embrace religion on baſe principles. Religion commands a ſubject to obey his king; a king may embrace religion on this account, and he may place his ſupreme happineſs in the obedience of his ſubjects. Religion diſcovers to us a merciful God; a wicked man may embrace religion on this account, for the ſake of calming thoſe fears, which his vicious practices excite,

SERM. X. excite, by ideas of divine mercy. The ſame may be ſaid of other men. A man cannot conclude then, that he is a believer from his performance of virtuous actions common to believers and unbelievers. He muſt have peculiar light into the deep depravity of his own heart; he muſt be placed at leaſt in deſign, in circumſtances, that diſtinguiſh a good from a bad man.

Again, when we ſay, a believer can never ceaſe to believe, we do not mean to ſay, a chriſtian, attached to religion only by external performances, and by appearances of piety, can never caſt off his profeſſion. The fineſt appearances of piety, the greateſt knowledge, the moſt liberal alms-deeds, the moſt profound humiliations may be ſucceeded by foul, and fatal practices.

Moreover, great knowledge, generous charity, profound humiliation, will aggravate the condemnation of thoſe, who ceaſe to proceed in virtue, and to purify their motives of action; becauſe the performance of theſe virtues, and the acquiſition of this great knowledge, ſuppoſe greater aid, and more reſiſtance. Hear S. Peter, *It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment.* The caſe of thoſe, who commit the unpardonable ſin, atteſts the ſame. Hear theſe thundering words, *If we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.*

2 Ep. ii. 21.

Heb. x. 26.

Finally, the argument from the teſtimony of the ſpirit of God for the aſſurance of a true believer, ought to trouble the ſecurity of a nominal chriſtian. In effect, how does the holy ſpirit work in our hearts? Does he operate by magick? Does he preſent phantoms to our view? Does he inculcate propoſitions contrary to truth? This is all enthuſiaſm. The holy ſpirit bears

bears witneſs in us in a manner conformable to our ſtate, and to the nature of things in general. If then the ſpirit of God teſtify in your hearts, while ye are unregenerate, he will teſtify, that ye are unregenerate. If he bear witneſs, while ye are nominal chriſtians, he will bear witneſs that ye are nominal chriſtians. If he bear witneſs, while your faith is doubtful, he will bear witneſs to the doubtfulneſs of your faith. Such a teſtimony may be aſcribed to the ſpirit of God. But an aſſurance of ſalvation, which exceeds your evidences of chriſtianity, muſt be a viſion, a fancy, a dream; and to ſuppoſe the holy ſpirit the author of ſuch an aſſurance, is to ſuppoſe in the ſame ſpirit teſtimony againſt teſtimony; it is to make the ſpirit of God *divided againſt himſelf*, and ſo a deſtroyer of his own kingdom; it is to make his teſtimony in the heart contradict his teſtimony in ſcripture. In ſcripture he declares, *No man can ſerve two maſters:* in your hearts he declares, A man may ſerve two maſters. In ſcripture he atteſts, There is *no concord between Chriſt and Belial*: in your hearts he atteſts, There is concord between Chriſt and Belial. In ſcripture he affirms, *Neither fornicators, nor covetous, nor revilers, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God:* in your hearts he affirms, ſuch ſhall inherit the kingdom of God. Thus the four arguments, that prove the doctrine of aſſurance in favour of true believers, deſtroy the ſecurity of a mere nominal chriſtian.

SERM. XI.

Mat. xii. 26. vi. 24. 2 Cor. vi. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

The conſolations, which ariſe from the doctrine of aſſurance, are not then for all chriſtians indifferently. They are only for thoſe, who continually ſtudy obedience; they are for thoſe only, who have ſeen into a *heart deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked*, and have found even there marks of regeneration; they are for thoſe only, who by a life entirely devoted to the ſervice of God, have demonſtrated, that they bear the characters of his children.

Jer. xvii. 9.

SERM. X. Is this your condition? Theſe ſophiſms of ſin, that we have endeavoured to refute, theſe portraits of raſh confidence, theſe falſe titles of virtue and regeneration, theſe images, that we have traced, whence have we taken them? Have we gathered them from books? have we invented them in our cloſets? have we derived them from the ſtudy of theology? have we drawn them from monuments of ancient hiſtory? No, no, we have learnt them in the world, in the church, in your families, in your ſick beds, where nothing is ſo common as this falſe peace, nothing ſo rare as the true.

Whence the evil comes, I know not: but the fact is certain. Of all churches in the world, there are none, perhaps, which abuſe the doctrine of chriſtian aſſurance, and which draw conſequences from it directly contrary to thoſe, which ought to be drawn, like ſome of ours. We lull ourſelves into a fanciful confidence: we place on imaginary ſyſtems an aſſurance, which ought to be founded only on *the rock of ages*; we ſcruple, even while we are engaged in the moſt criminal habits, to ſay, we doubt of our ſalvation; and, as if a perſuaſion of being ſaved diſpenſed with the neceſſity of working out our ſalvation, we conſider an aſſurance of arriving at heavenly felicity as a privilege, that ſupplies the want of every virtue.

Certainly, nothing is more great and happy than the diſpoſition of a man who couragiouſly expects to enjoy a glory, to which he has a juſt title. A man, who knows the miſery of ſin; a man, who groans under the weight of his own corruption, and enters into the ſentiment, while he utters the language of the apoſtle, *O wretched man that I am! who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* a man, who after he had experienced the terrible agitations of a conſcience diſtreſſed on account of ſin, hath been freed from all his ſins at the foot of the croſs, hath put on the yoke of Chriſt, his Lord; a man, who, having ſeen in himſelf

Rom. vii. 24.

ſelf the true characters of a chriſtian, and the never-failing graces annexed to evangelical mercy, hath learned at length to pierce through all the clouds, which Satan uſes to conceal heaven from the chriſtian eye, to lay all the ghoſts, that the enemy of ſouls raiſes to haunt mankind into terror; a man, who reſts on that *word of God*, which *ſtandeth for ever*, even when *heaven and earth paſs away*, may ſay, with S. Paul, *I am perſuaded*; ſuch a man may aſſure himſelf that only glorified ſpirits enjoy a happineſs ſuperior to his; he is arrived at the higheſt degree of felicity, to which in this valley of tears men can come. SERM. X. Iſai. xl. 8. Mat. xxiv. 35.

But to conſider religion always on the comfortable ſide; to congratulate one's-ſelf for having obtained the end, before we have made uſe of the means; to ſtretch the hands to receive the crown of righteouſneſs, before they have been employed to fight the battle; to be content with a falſe peace, and to uſe no efforts to obtain the graces, to which true conſolation is annexed; this is a dreadful calm, like that, which ſome voyagers deſcribe, and which is a very ſingular forerunner of a very terrible event. All on a ſudden, in the wide ocean, the ſea becomes calm, the ſurface of the water clear as cryſtal, ſmooth as glaſs, the air ſerene; the unſkilled paſſenger becomes tranquil and happy: but the old mariner trembles. In an inſtant the waves froth, the winds murmur, the heavens kindle, a thouſand gulphs open, a frightful light inflames the air, and every wave threatens ſudden death. This is an image of moſt men's aſſurance of ſalvation.

So then, inſtead of applying the words of our text to a great number of you, we are obliged to ſhed tears of compaſſion over you. Yes, we muſt lament your miſery. Ye live under an œconomy, in which the moſt tranſporting joys are ſet before you, and ye wilfully deprive yourſelves of them. Yes, we muſt adopt the language of a prophet, *O that my people had hearkened unto me!* We muſt ſay, with Jeſus Chriſt, *If thou hadſt*

SERM. X. *hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things, which belong unto thy peace!*

Pſal. lxxxi. 13. Luke xix. 42.

What can be happier, amidſt the numberleſs vanities and vexations, which accompany worldly pleaſures, than to be able to derive from an aſſurance of our ſalvation pleaſures ſuitable to intelligent creatures, immortal ſouls? What can be happier, amidſt all the pains, labours, and miſeries, with which life abounds, than to enjoy the plentiful conſolations, that iſſue from a well-grounded hope of eternal felicity? Above all, what can be more capable of ſupporting us againſt the fear of death? Mortal and dying as we are, in a ſtate, where the ſmalleſt alteration in the body reminds us of death, what can we wiſh for more conformable to our wants than to find in a firm hope of eternal felicity a ſhield to ſecure us againſt the enemy, and a ſword to deſtroy him? Let us ſtrive, let us pray, let us venture all, my brethren, to arrive at this happy ſtate. And if, after we have believingly, and ſincerely, laboured in this good work, there remain any doubt and ſuſpicion, let us aſſure ourſelves, that even our ſuſpicions and fears ſhall contribute to our confirmation. They will not be accounted crimes, they will at moſt be only frailties; they will be infirmities productive of motives to go on in virtue, and to eſtabliſh peace in the conſcience. So be it. To God be honour and glory. Amen.

SER-

SERMON XI.

JUDGMENT.

SERMON XI.

JUDGMENT.

HEBREWS ix. 27.

It is appointed unto men once to die: but after this the judgment.

THE ſecond propoſition in my text conveys terror into the firſt. Judgment to come makes death terrible. I own, it is natural to love life. The creator, it ſhould ſeem, hath ſupplied the want of ſatisfactory pleaſures in the world by giving us, I know not what, attachment to it. But when reaſon riſes out of nature, when the good and evil of life are weighed, evil ſeems to out-weigh good, and we can hardly help exclaiming with the wiſe man, *the day of death is better than the day of one's birth! I hate life becauſe of the work that is wrought under the ſun!* Eccl. vii. 1. ii. 17.

But to go from a bed of infirmity to a tribunal of juſtice; to look through the languors of a mortal malady to torments, that have no end; and, after we have heard this ſentence, *Return to deſtruction ye children of men*, to hear this other, *Give an account of thy ſtewardſhip:* theſe are juſt cauſes for intelligent beings to fear death. Pſal. xc. 3. Luke xvi. 2.

Let us, however, acknowledge, although this fear is juſt, yet it may be exceſſive; and, though it be madneſs to reſiſt the thought, yet it would be weakneſs to

SERM. XI. be overwhelmed with it. I wiſh, ye would try to day, while in this point of light I endeavour to exhibit to your view the judgment, that follows death.

We will not divert your attention from the chief deſign. We will only hint, that the propoſition in the text is incidental, and not immediately connected with the principal ſubject, which the apoſtle was diſcuſſing. His deſign was to ſhew the pre-eminence of the ſacrifice of the croſs over all thoſe of the levitical œconomy. One article, which argues the ſuperiority of the firſt, is, that it was offered but once, whereas the Jewiſh ſacrifices were reiterated. Chriſt doth *not offer himſelf often, as the high prieſt entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of other* ſacrifices: *but once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.* For, *as it is appointed unto men once to die*, and, *after this the judgment; ſo Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many.*

Nor will we detain you longer in enquiring, whether S. Paul ſpeaks here of the particular judgment, that each man undergoes immediately after death, or of that general judgment day, of which ſcripture ſays, *God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs.* Whatever difference there may ſeem to be between theſe two hypotheſes, it is eaſy to harmonize them. The general judgment will be a confirmation, and a conſummation of each particular judgment, and we ought to conſider both as different parts of one whole.

Acts xvii. 31.

Once more I repeat it, we will not divert your attention from the principal deſign of this diſcourſe. I am going firſt, not to alledge arguments in proof of a judgment to come, I ſuppoſe them known to you, and that I am not preaching to novices: but I am going to aſſiſt you to carry them farther than ye uſually do, and ſo to guard you againſt ſcepticiſm and infidelity, the peſt of our days, and the infamy of our age. In a ſecond article we will enquire, what will be the deſtiny of this aſſembly in that great day, in which God will

will declare the doom of all mankind. We diſcuſs SERM. this queſtion, not to indulge a vain curioſity: but to IX. derive practical inferences, and particularly to moderate the exceſſive fear, that an object ſo very terrible produceth in ſome minds, and at the ſame time to trouble the extravagant ſecurity, in which ſome ſleep, in ſpite of ſounds ſo proper to awake them.

I. We have three directions to give you. The firſt regards the argument for judgment taken from the diſorders of ſociety. The ſecond regards that, which is taken from conſcience. The third that, which is taken from revelation.

1. Our firſt direction regards the argument taken from the *diſorders of ſociety*. Do not confine your attention to thoſe diſorders, which ſtrike the ſenſes, aſtoniſh reaſon, and ſubvert faith itſelf. Reflect on other irregularities, which, although they are leſs ſhocking to ſenſe, and ſeemingly of much leſs conſequence, are yet no leſs deſerving the attention of the judge of the whole earth, and require, no leſs than the firſt, a future judgment.

I grant, thoſe notorious diſorders, which human laws cannot repreſs, are a full proof of a future judgment. A tyrant executes on a gibbet a poor unhappy man, whom the pains of hunger, and the frightful apprehenſion of ſudden death, forced to break open an houſe. Here, if ye will, diſorder is puniſhed, and ſociety is ſatisfied. But who ſhall ſatisfy the juſt vengeance of ſociety on this mad tyrant? This very tyrant, at the head of a hundred thouſand thieves, ravages the whole world; he pillages on the right, and on the left; he violates the moſt ſacred rights, the moſt ſolemn treaties; he knows neither religion nor good faith. Go, ſee, follow his ſteps, countries deſolated, plains covered with the bodies of the dead, palaces reduced to aſhes, and people run mad with deſpair. Enquire for the author of all theſe miſeries. Will ye find him, think ye, confined in a dark dungeon, or expiring

SERM. XI. expiring on a wheel? Lo! he ſits on a throne, in a ſuperb royal palace; nature and art contribute to his pleaſures; a circle of courtiers miniſter to his paſſions, and erect altars to him, whoſe equals in iniquity, yea, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, whoſe inferiors in vice have juſtly ſuffered the moſt infamous puniſhments. And where is divine juſtice all this time? what is it doing? I anſwer with my text, *After death comes judgment. So ſpeak ye, and ſo do, as they, that ſhall be judged by the law of liberty.*

James ii. 12.

But, though the argument taken from the diſorders of ſociety is full and clear, when it is properly propoſed, yet ſuch examples as we have juſt mentioned do not exhauſt it. It may be extended a great deal farther, and we may add thouſands of diſorders, which every day are ſeen in ſociety, againſt which men can make no laws, and which cannot be redreſſed until the great day of judgment, when God will give clear evidence of all.

Have human laws been ever made againſt hypocrites? See that man, artfully covering himſelf with the veil of religion, that hypocrite, who excels in his art! behold his eyes, what ſeraphical looks they roll towards heaven! obſerve his features, made up, if I may venture to ſay ſo, of thoſe of Moſes, Ezra, Daniel, and Nehemiah! ſee his vivacity, or his flaming zeal, ſhall I call it? to maintain the doctrines of religion, to forge thunderbolts, and to pour out anathemas againſt hereticks! Not one grain of religion, not the leaſt ſhadow of piety in all his whole converſation. It is a party-ſpirit, or a ſordid intereſt, or a barbarous diſpoſition to revenge, which animates him, and produces all his pretended piety. And yet I hear every body exclaim, He is a miracle of religion! he is a pillar of the church! I ſee altars every where erecting to this man; panegyriſts, I ſee, are compoſing his encomium; flowers are gathering to be ſtrewed over his tomb. And the juſtice of God, what is it doing? My text tells you, *After death comes judgment.* Have

Have human laws been ever made againſt the ungrateful? While I was in proſperity, I ſtudied to procure happineſs to a man, who ſeemed entirely devoted to me; I was happier in imparting my abundance to him than in enjoying it myſelf; during that delightful period of my life he was faithful to me: but when fortune abandoned me, and adopted him, he turned his back on me; now he ſuffers me to languiſh in poverty; and, far from relieving my wants, he does not deign ſo much as to examine them. And divine juſtice, where is it? Who ſhall puniſh this black crime? I anſwer again, *After death comes judgment.* SERM. XI.

Have men made laws againſt cowards? I do not mean cowardice in war; the infamy, that follows this crime, is a juſt puniſhment of it. I ſpeak of that mean cowardice of ſoul, which makes a man forſake an oppreſſed innocent ſufferer, and keep a criminal ſilence in regard to the oppreſſor. Purſue this train of thought, and ye will every where find arguments for a future judgment; becauſe there will every where appear diſorders, which eſtabliſh the neceſſity of it.

Our ſecond direction regards the argument taken from *conſcience*. Let not your faith be ſhaken by the examples of thoſe pretended ſuperior geniuſſes, who boaſt of having freed themſelves from this reſtraint. Tell them, if they have no conſcience, they ought to have; and affirm, the truer their pretenſion the ſtronger your reaſon for taxing them with rage and extravagance. There is no better mode of deſtroying an objection than by proving, that he, who propoſes and admits it, is a fool for admitting and propoſing it. If, then, I prove, that a man, who, to demonſtrate that conſcience is a fancy, declares, he is entirely exempt from it; if I prove, that ſuch a man is a fool for propoſing and admitting this propoſition, ſhall I not ſubvert his whole ſyſtem? Now I think, I am able to prove ſuch a man a fool, and ye will admit the truth of what I ſay,

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SERM. XI. if ye will give a little attention to the nature of conſcience, a little cloſer attention, I mean, than is uſually given to ſermons.

What is conſcience? It is difficult to include an adequate idea of it in a definition? This appears to me at once the moſt general and the moſt exact. Conſcience is that faculty of our minds, by which we are able to diſtinguiſh right from wrong, and to know whether we neglect our duties, or diſcharge them.

There are, I grant, ſome operations of conſcience, which ſeem to be rather inſtinct and ſentiment than cool judgment ariſing from a train of reflections. Yet, we believe, all the operations of conſcience proceed from judgment and reflection. But it ſometimes happens, that the judgment of the mind is ſo ready, and its reflections ſo rapid, that it hardly ſees what it judges, and reflects on, ſo that it ſeems to act by inſtinct and ſentiment only. Thus when the mind compares two ſimple numbers together, the compariſon is ſo eaſily made, that we think we know the difference by a kind of inſtinct belonging to our nature; whereas when we compare complex numbers, we feel, ſo to ſpeak, that our minds enquire, examine, and labour. In like manner in morality. There are ſome duties, the right of which is ſo clear and palpable; and there are ſome conditions, in which we, ourſelves, are in regard to theſe duties, which are ſo eaſy to be known, that the mind inſtantly perceives them without examination and diſcuſſion. But there are ſome duties, the right of which is ſo enveloped in obſcurity; and there are ſome ſtations, which are ſo very doubtful, that the mind requires great efforts of meditation before it can determine itſelf. For example, *Ought a ſubject to obey his lawful ſovereign?* On this queſtion, the mind inſtantly takes the affirmative ſide, on account of the clearneſs of the duty, and it ſeems to act by inſtinct, and without reflection. But here is another queſtion, *Is it lawful for ſubjects to dethrone a tyrant?*

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Here the mind pauſes, and before it determines enters into long diſcuſſions, and here, we perceive, it acts by judgment and reflection. In both caſes reflection and judgment are the ground of its operations. In the firſt caſe judgment is more rapid, reflection leſs ſlow: but it is reflection however. We have, then, rightly defined conſcience, that faculty of our ſouls, by which we are capable of diſtinguiſhing right from wrong, and of knowing whether we neglect our duties, or diſcharge them. SERM. XI.

But this is too vague, we muſt go farther. We muſt examine the principles, on which we ground our judgment of ourſelves in regard to right and wrong. We muſt prove, by the nature of theſe principles, the truth of what we have affirmed; that is, that a man, who calls conſcience a fancy, and who boaſts of an entire freedom from it, is a fool for admitting and propoſing this objection.

The judgment, that conſtitutes the nature of conſcience, is founded on three principles, either fully demonſtrable, or barely probable.

Firſt, I am in a ſtate of dependence.

Second, There is a ſupreme law; or what is the ſame thing, there is ſomething right, and ſomething wrong.

Third, I am either innocent, or guilty.

On theſe three principles an intelligent ſpirit grounds a judgment, whether it deſerves to be happy or miſerable; it rejoiceth, if it deſerve to be happy; it mourns, if it deſerve to be miſerable; and this judgment, and this joy, or ſorrow, which reſults from it, conſtitute what we call conſcience.

But that, which deſerves particular regard, and in which partly conſiſts the force of our reaſoning, is, that it is not neceſſary to be able to demonſtrate theſe principles, in order to prove, that conſcience is not a fancy; if they be probable, it is ſufficient. We can not reaſonably free ourſelves from conſcience, till we have

SERM. XI. demonſtrated the falſhood of theſe principles, and proved, that the conſequences drawn from them are chimerical. For, if theſe principles be only probable; if it be probable, I may be happy, I have ſome reaſon to rejoice; as I have ſome reaſon for uneaſineſs, if my miſery be probable. If the enjoyment of a great benefit be probable, I have ſome reaſon for great pleaſure; and I have ſome reaſon for extreme diſtreſs, if it be probable, that I ſhall fall into extreme miſery. It is not neceſſary, therefore, in order to eſtabliſh the empire of conſcience, that the principles, on which it is founded, ſhould be demonſtrable; it is ſufficient, that they are probable. Now I affirm, that every man, who maintains the improbability of theſe principles, and the vanity of the conſequences, that are drawn from them, is a fool and a madman, whoſe obſtinate attachment to vice has blinded his eyes, and turned his brain. Conſequently, I affirm, that every man, who maintains that conſcience is a fancy, and who boaſts of having ſhaken off the reſtraint of it, is a fool and a madman.

Take the firſt principle. *I am in a ſtate of dependence.* I am ſubject to a ſupreme being, to whom I owe my exiſtence, and who holds my deſtiny in his mighty hands. Do we exceed the truth, when we ſay, a man, who ventures to affirm, this principle is neither demonſtrable nor probable, is a madman and a fool? I told you at the beginning of this diſcourſe, that I intended to ſpeak to you, not as ſcholars and novices: but as well-informed chriſtians, who have made ſome conſiderable progreſs in the knowledge of thoſe truths, which equally ſupport natural and revealed religion. But if ye have any juſt notions of theſe truths, how can ye form any other opinion of theſe men, of whom I am ſpeaking, than that which I have formed? A man, who pretends, that arguments drawn from the order of ſeaſons, from the arrangements of the various parts of the univerſe, from the harmony of the members of

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our bodies, and all the other works of nature, by which we have ſo often eſtabliſhed the doctrines of the being and attributes of God; a man, who affirms, that all theſe demonſtrate nothing; what am I ſaying? a man, who affirms, that all theſe prove nothing; what am I ſaying again? a man, who affirms that all theſe do not afford the leaſt degree of probability in favour of the exiſtence, and perfections of a ſupreme being; who for his part is ſure, for he has evidence to a demonſtration, that all theſe originated in chance, and were not formed by the intervention of any intelligent cauſe; ſuch a man, what is he but a madman and a fool? and conſequently, is it not madneſs and folly to deny this firſt principle, *I am in a ſtate of dependence?* SERM. XI.

Try the ſecond principle. *There is a ſupreme law*, or, what comes to the ſame, there is ſomething juſt, and ſomething unjuſt. Whether this juſt and right be founded in the nature of things, or whether it proceed from the will of a ſuperior being, is not needful to examine now; be it as it may, there is a ſupreme law, there is ſomething right, and ſomething wrong. A man, who pretends, that this propoſition is evidently falſe; a man, who affirms, that all arguments brought in favour of this propoſition are evidently falſe; a man, who forms ſuch an idea of all arguments drawn from the nature of intelligent beings, from the perfections of a firſt cauſe, from the laws, that he hath given, and which conſtitute the body of religion; a man, who pretends, that all theſe arguments do not afford the leaſtd egree of probability, that a wiſe man ought to infer nothing from them to direct his life; and that for his part, it is clear to a demonſtration to him, that what is called juſt, and unjuſt, right, and wrong, is indifferent in itſelf, and indifferent to the firſt cauſe; that it is perfectly indifferent in itſelf whether we love a benefactor, or betray him, whether we be faithful to a friend, or perfidious, whether we be tender parents or cruel, whether we nouriſh our children, or

SERM. XI. ſmother them in the cradle; and that all theſe things, at the moſt, relate only to a preſent intereſt; a man, who advanceth ſuch propoſitions, what is he, but a fool and a madman? Is it neceſſary to reaſon to diſcover the extravagance and madneſs of theſe poſitions? Is it not ſufficient to name them?

Take the third principle. . . . But, it is enough to have pointed out the moſt proper method of anſwering the objections of a man, who pretends conſcience is a fancy, and who boaſts of having none.

Let us paſs, then, to our third direction. It concerns the proof taken from revelation. Do not reſt the arguments drawn from this ſource on any particular paſſages, which, although they may be very full and explicit, may yet be ſubject to ſome ſophiſtical exception: but reſt them on the general deſign and ſcope of religion; this method is above all objections, and free from every difficulty. If this way be adopted, it will preſently appear, that the doctrine of a future judgment is contained in a manner clear and convincing, not only in the writings of apoſtles and evangeliſts, but alſo in the revelations, with which God honoured the patriarchs, many ages before he gave a written law.

Yea, were we to allow, that we have no formal paſſage to produce, in which this truth was taught the ancient ſervants of God, (which we are very far from allowing.) we might ſtill maintain, that it was included in the genius of thoſe revelations, which were addreſſed to them. Jeſus Chriſt taught us to reaſon thus on the doctrine of future rewards, and we may fairly apply the ſame method to the doctrine of future puniſhments. The doctrine of future rewards is not contained in the formal terms: but in the general deſign of this promiſe,

Mat. xxii. 32. *I am the God of Abraham.* How ſplendid ſoever the condition of Abraham might have been, how ever abundant his riches, how ever numerous his ſervants, this promiſe proceeding from the mouth of God, *I am*

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the God of Abraham, could not have been accompliſhed in the temporal proſperity of a man, who was dead, when the words were ſpoken, and whom death ſhould retain in durance. As God declared himſelf *the God of Abraham*, and as Abraham was dead, when he declared it, Abraham muſt neceſſarily riſe again. And this is our Saviour's reaſoning, *God is not the God of the dead: but of the living.* SERM. XI.

Let us ſay the ſame of thoſe puniſhments, which God has denounced againſt ſin, in regard to thoſe ancient ſinners, of whom God declared himſelf the judge; *God is not the judge of the dead: but of the living.* The wicked, during this life, are often free from adverſity: but were they even miſerable all the time of their abiding on earth, their miſeries would not ſufficiently expreſs God's hatred of ſin. Aſaph renders to divine juſtice only one part of its deſerved homage, when he ſays, in order to juſtify it for tolerating ſome criminals, *Surely thou didſt ſet them in ſlippery places, thou caſtedſt them down into deſtruction. How are they brought into deſolation as in a moment! they are utterly conſumed with terrors! As a dream, when one awaketh, ſo, O Lord, thou ſhalt deſpiſe their image.* No! the unexpected viciſſitudes, that ſometimes confound the devices of the wicked, the fatal cataſtrophes, in which we ſometimes ſee them enveloped, the ſignal reverſes of fortune, by which they are often precipitated from the higheſt elevation to the deepeſt diſtreſs; all theſe are too imperfect to verify thoſe reiterated threatnings, which the judge of mankind denounced againſt primitive criminals, to teach them that he was a juſt avenger of ſin. To diſplay this fully there muſt be a reſurrection and a judgment. In this manner, even ſuppoſing there were no formal paſſages in proof of future judgment; (which we do not allow.) the genius, the drift and ſcope of religion, would be ſufficient to convince us of the truth of it.

II.

SERM. XI. II. What has been ſaid ſhall ſuffice for proof of this truth, *after death comes judgment.* But what ſhall be the deſtiny of this audience? What ſentence will the judge of the world pronounce on us in that formidable day, when he ſhall judge the world in righteouſneſs? Will it be a ſentence of mercy? will he pronounce our abſolution? will he ſay to us, *Depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?* or will he ſay to us, *Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom?*

Mat. xxv. 41. 34.

This is a difficult queſtion; however, it is not ſo difficult as ſome of us may imagine. S. Paul lays down a principle, that caſts light on the enquiry; that is, that men will be judged according to the œconomies, under which they lived. *As many, as have ſinned without law, ſhall alſo periſh without law; and as many, as have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law,* that is to ſay, as having lived under the levitical œconomy. *They who have ſinned in the law, ſhall be judged by the law;* to which we may fairly add, they, who have lived under the goſpel, ſhall be judged by the goſpel. Now the goſpel is an œconomy of light, an œconomy of proportion, and an œconomy of mercy. Theſe three rules, by which God will regulate our eternal deſtiny, ſhould quiet the exceſſive fears, which an idea of future judgment excites in ſome pious, but timorous ſouls. And, at the ſame time, they ought to diſturb the falſe peace of thoſe, who ſleep in indolence amidſt objects ſo proper to awake them.

Rom. ii. 12.

1. We ſhall be judged as having lived under an œconomy of *light.* This propoſition hath a comfortable aſpect on a good man. We ſhall be judged according to what is clear in the goſpel itſelf: and not according to what is abſtruſe and impenetrable in the ſyſtems of the ſchools. What inducement could we poſſibly have to endeavour to inform ourſelves, were we prepoſſeſſed with a notion, that our ſentence would be regulated by our ideas on a thouſand queſtions, which

which ſome men have boldly ſtated, raſhly decided, and barbarouſly enforced on others? Were it neceſſary to have clear and complete ideas of the arrangement of the decrees of the firſt cauſe, of the nature of the divine eſſence, of the manner in which God foreſees contingent events, and of many other ſuch queſtions as obſcure as uſeleſs; were it neceſſary, in order to receive a favourable ſentence, to be able to decide ſome caſes of conſcience, which have always been indeterminable by the ableſt caſuiſts; were theſe neceſſary, who dare examine theſe queſtions? But, chriſtian ſoul! baniſh thy ſcruples. Thy God, thy judge, is the ſovereign of his creatures: but he is not their tyrant. Thou art free: not a ſlave. The œconomy, according to which thou ſhalt be judged, is an œconomy of light; and whatever is impenetrable and undecided in the goſpel, has no relation to that trial, which thou wilt undergo. SERM. XI.

But if this truth be amiable and comfortable to good people, it is alſo formidable, terrifying, and deſperate to people of an oppoſite character. Ye will be judged as reaſonable beings, who had it in their power to diſcover truth and virtue. In vain will ye pretend ignorance of ſome articles. Your judge will open this ſacred book in my hand, in which the deciſion of theſe articles is contained; the elucidation of all the truths, of which ye are wilfully ignorant. Will not your ignorance appear voluntary, when God judges you with the light of this goſpel in his hand?

Nothing is more common in the world, than to hear men exculpate their errors by pleading their ſincerity. "If I be deceived," ſays one, "in taking the "book, which you call ſcripture by excellence, for a "mere human compilation, I am very ſincere in my "error, and it does not depend on me to alter my "ideas." And why does it not depend on you to change your ideas? Have you examined thoſe evidences of the divinity of the book, which ſhine in every part of it? Have you once in your life thoroughly examined the

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SERM. XI. ſenſe of any prophecy, to find out whether a ſpirit of prophecy inſpired the ſacred writers? Is it a ſincere miſtake to deceive ones-ſelf, rather than apply to this important queſtion, that ſtudy, that time, and that examination, which it demands?

"If I be in an error," ſays another, "in adhering "to a particular communion, I err very ſincerely, and I "cannot change my ideas." And why cannot you change your ideas? Have you availed yourſelf of the light of the times, in which you live? Have you conſulted thoſe miniſters, who can inform you? Have you riſen from that ſtate of indolence, eaſe and prudence, which inclines people rather to take it for granted, that they were born in a true church, than to examine, whether they were ſo? Does it require more ſagacity, more genius, more labour to find out, that in our ſcriptures worſhipping before images of wood or ſtone is forbidden; that purgatory is a mere human invention; that the traffick of indulgences is a mercenary ſcheme; that the authority of the Roman pontiff is founded only on worldly policy? I aſk, Is more penetration neceſſary to determine theſe articles, than to command an army, to purſue a ſtate-intrigue, to manage a trade, or to cultivate an art or a ſcience?

In like manner, we every day ſee people in ſociety, who, while they boldly violate the moſt plain and allowed precepts of the goſpel, pretend to exculpate themſelves fully by ſaying, "We do not think ſuch "a conduct ſinful; what crime can there be in ſuch "and ſuch a practice?"

An obſtinate gameſter ſays, "I think, there is no "harm in gaming." And why do you think ſo? Is not the goſpel before your eyes? Does not the goſpel tell you, it is not allowable to deceive? Does not the goſpel clearly prohibit a waſte of time? Does not the goſpel forbid you to ruin your neighbour? Does not the goſpel plainly forbid you to cheat? And you, obſtinate gameſter! do not you deceive in gaming?

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Do not you waſte your time? Do not you do all in your power towards the ruin of your neighbour? Do not you cheat, while you play, and defraud them, who play with you, and practiſe a thouſand other artifices, which it would be improper to relate here: but which God will one day examine at his juſt tribunal? SERM. XI.

Thus a miſer exclaims, "O, there can be no harm in "loving the world as I love it." And what makes you think ſo? Could you not eaſily undeceive yourſelf by caſting your eyes on the goſpel? Does not the goſpel clearly ſay, *The covetous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God?* Is it not clearly revealed in the goſpel, that *Whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, the love of God doth not dwell in him?* Does not the goſpel plainly tell you, that God will one day ſay to thoſe, who have been devoid of charity, *Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire! for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat?*

1 Cor. vi. 10. 1 John iii. 17. Mat. xxv. 41, 42.

Thus a time-ſerver ſays to us, "I think, there is "no ſin in living where liberty of conſcience is not "allowed, provided I make no profeſſion of ſuper-"ſtition and idolatry." And why do you think ſo? Does not the goſpel clearly require you *not to forſake the aſſembling of yourſelves together*; and do not you forſake our public aſſemblies? Does not the goſpel expreſsly require you to *come out of Babylon*; and do you not abide there? Are you not informed in the goſpel, that *he, who loveth father, or mother, or ſon, or daughter, more* than Jeſus Chriſt, is *not worthy* of the name of a chriſtian? And, pray, do not you prefer your relations before Jeſus Chriſt?

Heb. x. 25. Rev. xviii. 4. Mat. x. 37.

"I do not think," adds one, who maintains an illicit commerce, "there can be any harm in indulging thoſe "paſſions, which ariſe from the fine feelings of our "own hearts." And why do you not think ſo? Does God forbid impurity only when it is unconſtitutional? In the general rule, which excludes the unclean from

SERM. XI. the kingdom of heaven, has the legiſlator made an exception in favour of thoſe, who follow the emotions of an irregular heart?

2. We ſhall be judged as having lived under an œconomy of *proportion*; I mean to ſay, the virtues, which God requireth of us under the goſpel, are proportioned to the faculties, that he hath given us to perform them. Let us not enfeeble this maxim by theological opinions, which do not belong to it. Let us not alledge, that all duty is out of our power, that of ourſelves we can do nothing. For when we ſay, the laws of God are proportioned to our weakneſs, we ſpeak of perſons born in the church, inſtructed in the truths of revelation, and who are either aſſiſted by ſpiritual ſuccours, or may be, if they ſeek for theſe bleſſings as they ought to be ſought. In regard to theſe perſons, we affirm, the goſpel is an œconomy of proportion, and this is the great conſolation of a good man. I grant, the perfection, to which God calls us, is infinitely beyond our natural power, and even beyond the ſupernatural aſſiſtance, that he imparts to us. But we ſhall be judged by the efforts, which we have made, to arrive at this end. Endeavours to be perfect will be accounted perfection.

This very law of proportion, which will regulate the judgment of us, will overwhelm the wicked with miſery. It is always an aggravation of a miſery to reflect that we might have avoided it, and that we brought it upon ourſelves. The leaſt reproach of this kind is a deadly poiſon, that invenoms our ſufferings, and this will conſtitute one of the moſt cruel torments of the damned. Ye devouring fires, which the juſtice of God hath kindled in hell, I have no need of the light of your flames to diſcover to me the miſeries of a reprobate ſoul! Ye chains of darkneſs, which weigh him down, I have no need to examine the weight of you! The criminal's own reproaches of himſelf are ſufficient to give me an idea of his ſtate. He will remember,

member, when he finds himſelf irretrievably loſt, he will remember the time, when he might have prevented his loſs. He will recollect how practicable thoſe laws were, for violating which he ſuffers. He will recollect the mighty aſſiſting power, which he once deſpiſed. Thou! thou wilt recollect the ſage advice, that was given thee. Thou! this ſermon, which I have been addreſſing to thee. Thou! thine education. Thou! the voice of the holy Spirit, that urged thee to change thy life. *O Iſrael! thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf!* This, this is the excruciating reflection of a nominal chriſtian condemned by divine juſtice to everlaſting flames. Such a chriſtian ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire will inceſſantly be his own tormentor. He will ſay to himſelf, I am the author of my own deſtruction! I might have been ſaved! I, I alone, condemned myſelf to everlaſting confinement in theſe dungeons of horror, to which I am now conſigned. SERM. XI. Hoſ. xiii. 9.

3. Finally, We ſhall be judged as having lived under an œconomy of *mercy*. What can be more capable, at once, of comforting a good man againſt an exceſſive fear of judgment, and of arouſing a bad man from his fatal ſecurity?

All the ſentiments of benevolence, that ye can expect in an equitable judge; we ſay more, all the ſentiments of tenderneſs, which ye can expect in a ſincere friend; we ſay more ſtill, all the ſentiments of pity, compaſſion, and love, that can be expected in a tender parent, ye will find in the perſon of the judge, who will pronounce your eternal doom.

Let us not elevate our paſſions into virtues. Fear of the judgments of God, which carried to a certain degree is a virtue, becomes a condemnable paſſion, at leaſt, a frailty, that ought to be oppoſed, when it exceeds due bounds. Do ye render an acceptable homage to Almighty God, think ye, by doubting his mercy, the moſt lovely ray of his glory? Do ye render a proper homage to God, think ye, by conſidering him

SERM. XI. as a tyrant? Do ye think, ye render homage to the deity by doubting his moſt expreſs and ſacred promiſes? Do ye believe, ye pay an acceptable tribute to God by profeſſing to think, that he will take pleaſure in eternally tormenting a poor creature, who uſed all his efforts to pleaſe him; who mourned ſo often over his own defects; who ſhed the bittereſt tears over the diſorders of his life; and who, for the whole world, (had the whole world been at his diſpoſal) would not have again offended a God, whoſe laws he always revered, even while he was ſo weak as to break them?

But this thought, that chriſtians ſhall be judged by an œconomy of mercy; this very thought, ſo full of conſolation to good men, will drive the wicked to the deepeſt deſpair. The mercy of God in the goſpel hath certain bounds, and we ought to conſider it, as it really is, connected with the other perfections of his nature. Whenever we place it in a view incongruous with the other perfections of the ſupreme being, we make it inconſiſtent with itſelf. Now this is done, when it is applied to one claſs of ſinners. I repeat it again, it is this, that fills up the bad man's meaſure of deſperation.

Miſerable wretch! how canſt thou be ſaved, if the *fountain opened to the houſe of David* be ſhut againſt thee? if that love, which created the world, if that love, which inclined the ſon of God, (*the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.*) to clothe himſelf with mortal fleſh, and to expire on a croſs; if this love be not ſufficient to ſave thee, if this love be ſlighted by thee, by what means muſt thou be wrought on, or in what way muſt thou be ſaved? And, if the redeemer of the world condemn thee, to what judge canſt thou flee for abſolution?

Let us, my dear brethren, inceſſantly revolve in our minds theſe ideas of death and judgment. Let us uſe them to calm thoſe exceſſive fears, which the neceſſity of dying, and being judged, ſometimes excites in our ſouls,

But

But exceſſive fear is not the uſual ſin of this congregation. Our uſual ſins are indolence, carnal ſecurity, ſleeping life away on the brink of an abyſs, flames above our heads, and hell beneath our feet. SERM. XI.

Let us quit this miſerable ſtation. *Happy is the man that feareth alway!* Happy the man, who in every temptation, by which he is annoyed, in a world where all things ſeem to conſpire to involve us in endleſs deſtruction; happy the man, who in all his trials knows how to derive conſolation from this ſeemingly terrible truth, *It is appointed unto men once to die: but after this the judgment!* To God be honour and glory for ever. Amen. Prov. xxviii. 14.

SER-

SERMON XII.

HEAVEN.

SERMON XII.

HEAVEN.

1 JOHN iii. 2.

We know, that, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.

ONE of the moſt beautiful ideas, that can be formed of the goſpel, is that, which repreſents it as imparting to a chriſtian the attributes of God. S. Peter, and S. Paul, both expreſs themſelves in a manner truly ſublime and emphatical on this ſubject. The firſt of theſe holy men ſays, the end of the promiſes of God is to make us *partakers of the divine nature.* The ſecond aſſures us, that *all* chriſtians, *beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord.* If we believe ſome criticks, the original terms may be rendered, *we all become as mirrors.* A mirror, placed over againſt a luminous object, reflects its rays, and returns its image. This is agreeable to chriſtian experience under the goſpel. Good men, attentive to the divine attributes, bowing, like the ſeraphims, towards the myſtical ark, placed oppoſite to the ſupreme being, meet with nothing to intercept his rays; and, reflecting in their turn this light by imitating the moral attributes of God, they become as ſo many mirrors, exhibiting in themſelves the objects of their own contemplation. Thus God, by an effect of his adorable

2 Ep. i. 4.

2 Cor. iii. 18.

SERM. XII. condeſcenſion, after having clothed himſelf with our fleſh and blood, after having been *made in the likeneſs of men* in the eſtabliſhment of the goſpel, transforms this fleſh and blood into a likeneſs of himſelf. Such is the ſublimity and glory of the chriſtian religion! We are *partakers of the divine nature*; we are *changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the Lord.* My brethren, we have often repeated a famous maxim of the ſchools, and we adopt it now, Grace is glory begun. One of the moſt beautiful ideas, that we can form of that ineffable glory, which God reſerves for us in heaven, is that, which the ſacred authors give us of chriſtianity, that is, that we ſhall participate the divine attributes. Heaven and the church, the chriſtian in a ſtate of grace and the chriſtian in a ſtate of glory, differ only in degree. All the difference between the two changes is, that the firſt, I mean a chriſtian in a ſtate of grace, retains the imperfection, which is eſſential to this life, whereas the other, I mean the chriſtian in a ſtate of glory, is perfect in his kind, ſo that both are changed into the image of the deity as far as creatures in their conditions are capable of being ſo.

Phil. ii. 7.

This is the difficult, but intereſting ſubject, which we are now going to diſcuſs. We are going to enquire into the queſtion ſo famous, I dare not ſay ſo developed, in the ſchools, concerning the beatifick viſion of God. We will endeavour to explain how we *ſee* God in Heaven, and how this happy viſion will render us *like* him, who will be the object of it. S. John ſupplies us with theſe images. He diſplays the happineſs of chriſtians thus. *Behold*, ſays he, *what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God.* But, while he paſſes encomiums on the mercy of God, he obſerves, that we have only yet enjoyed foretaſtes of it; *we know*, adds he, *that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

Our

SERM. XII.

Our text has two ſenſes; the firſt regards the human nature of Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſecond the deity. The firſt of theſe ſenſes is very eaſy and natural; *when the ſon of God ſhall appear, we ſhall ſee him as he is*; that is to ſay, when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come to judge mankind, we ſhall ſee his glorified body. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is*; that is, our bodies, having acquired at the reſurrection qualities relative to glorified bodies, like that of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall have the faculty of contemplating his body. This ſenſe deſerves examination.

We have no diſtinct idea of what ſcripture calls *a glorious body*. The moſt abſtruſe metaphyſicks, the moſt profound erudition, and the moſt ſublime theology cannot enable us fully to explain this famous paſſage of S. Paul; *There are celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtrial: but the glory of the celeſtial is one, and the glory of the terreſtrial is another. There is one glory of the ſun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the ſtars. So alſo is the reſurrection of the dead. The body is ſown in corruption, it is raiſed in incorruption. It is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in glory. It is ſown in weakneſs, it is raiſed in power. It is ſown a natural body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual body.* Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 40.

But how difficult ſoever this paſſage may be, we know by experience, there are bodies, to which our ſenſes bear no proportion; and, if I may be allowed to ſpeak in this manner, there are bodies inapprehenſible by our faculty of ſeeing. There is no proportion between my eyes and bodies extremely ſmall. My faculty of ſeeing does not extend to a mite; a mite is a non-entity to my eye. There is no proportion between my eyes and bodies which have not a certain degree of conſiſtence. My ſeeing faculty does not extend to an aerial body; an aerial body is a mere non-entity in regard to my ſight. There is very little proportion between my eyes and bodies extraordinarily rapid. My faculty of ſeeing does not extend to

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objects moving at a certain rate; a body muſt move ſo ſlow as to make a kind of reſt before my eye in order to be perceived by it; and, as ſoon as a greater force communicates a quicker motion to it, it recedes, diminiſhes, diſappears. But were the faculties of my body proportioned to theſe objects; had my body qualities ſimilar to theirs; I ſhould then be able to ſee them; *I ſhould ſee them as they are, for I ſhould be like them.*

Let us apply theſe general reflections to our ſubject. There may be perhaps no proportion between our bodies in their preſent earthly ſtate and what the ſcripture calls *glorious bodies*. Our faculty of ſeeing perhaps may not extend to glorious bodies. Were the groſs terreſtrial bodies, to which our ſouls are united, all on a ſudden tranſlated to that manſion of glory, in which the bodies of Enoch and Elias wait for the conſummation of all things, probably we might not be able to ſee them clearly, and perhaps we might be quite dazzled with the glory of them. The reaſons juſt now mentioned may account for what we ſuppoſe; as any, who have habituated themſelves to reflection, may eaſily comprehend. But, when our bodies ſhall be *changed, when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on immortality*; in a word, when our bodies ſhall have the ſame faculties as the glorious body of Jeſus Chriſt, *we ſhall ſee him as he is, for we ſhall be like him.* This is the firſt ſenſe given to the words of the text, a ſenſe, that may ſerve to preclude a part of the difficulties, which may ariſe; a ſenſe entirely conformable to the analogy of faith, and to a great many other paſſages of holy ſcripture, ſuch as theſe, *Our converſation is in heaven, from whence alſo we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body. Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God; when Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory. The firſt man is of the earth, earthy;*

1 Cor xv. 51. 54.

Phil. iii. 20, 21.

Col. iii. 3, 4.

earthy; the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly.

SERM. XII. 1 Cor. xv. 47, &c.

Grand idea of heavenly felicity, my brethren! Glorified believers ſhall ſee with their eyes the glorious body of Jeſus Chriſt. Yea, theſe eyes, reſtored to ſight, and endowed with new powers, ſhall ſee the God-man; they ſhall ſee that body of the Saviour of the world, which once *increaſed in favour* here below, and which is now arrived at the higheſt pitch of glory in heaven. They ſhall ſee thoſe *lips, into* which *grace is poured.* They ſhall ſee that Son of man, who is *fairer than* all the reſt of *the children of men.* What joy to contemplate this object! What delight, if I may ſpeak ſo, when the rays of the deity, always too bright and confounding for mortal eyes to behold, ſhall be ſoftened to our ſight in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt! What tranſporting joy to ſee the greateſt miracle, that was ever included in the plans of the wiſdom of God! What felicity to behold in the body of Jeſus Chriſt a right of approaching with confidence to a familiarity with God! *We know that, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

Luke ii. 52. Pſal. xlv. 2.

But, although this may be one meaning of our apoſtle, yet it is neither the only ſenſe of his words, nor does it ſeem to be the principal one. Should any doubt what I now affirm; ſhould any affirm, that, when the apoſtle ſays, *we ſhall ſee him he is*, he only means to ſpeak of the body of Jeſus Chriſt; I would beg leave to obſerve, that S. John evidently intends by the viſion, of which he ſpeaks, that, which conſummates our happineſs. Now our happineſs will not be conſummated by only ſeeing the body of the Son of God, nor by the glorification of our bodies only. Another idea, therefore, muſt be included in the words of the text.

Beſide,

SERM. XII. Beſide, the original doth not ſay, *When* Jeſus Chriſt *ſhall appear: but when* he *ſhall appear, we ſhall ſee him as he is*; which may be referred to God, of whom the apoſtle had been ſpeaking in the preceding verſes. We ſhall *ſee God*, and this ſight will render us *like him.*

I even ſuppoſe, the words of my text are a kind of quotation of an opinion advanced by ſome ancient Jewiſh Rabbies. We have found, as it it were by chance, and when we were not ſtudying this text, an opinion taken from the writings of the Jews, which ſeems either to allude to the words of the text, or, being more ancient than the text, to be alluded to by the apoſtle. A Conſul of Rome required a Rabbi to explain the names of God to him. This is the anſwer of the Rabbi. "You aſk me the meaning of the name of four letters, and the name of twelve letters, and the name of forty letters (In this manner, my brethren, the Jews ſpeak of the terms expreſſive of the attributes of God.) But, I muſt inform you, theſe are myſteries altogether divine, and which ought to be concealed from the generality of mankind. However, as I have been credibly aſſured, that you have rendered many good ſervices to learned men, and as nothing ought to be concealed from ſuch perſons, it is requiſite, I ſhould endeavour to anſwer your queſtion to your ſatisfaction. I declare, then, that, ſtrictly ſpeaking, there is no name given to God, by which we can be made fully to comprehend what he is. His name is his eſſence, of which we can form no diſtinct idea; for could we fully comprehend the eſſence of God we ſhould be like God." * Theſe words are full of meaning, and, were it neceſſary to explain them, they would open a wide field to our meditation. They lay down a principle of momentary uſe to us, that is, that we muſt be infinite in order fully to comprehend an infinite being. We will, however, take a ſlight curſory view of the ſubject. We will

* Rabbi Nehemias in Epiſtola ſanctor. ad filium ſuum Haçanan.

will examine how we ſhall *ſee God*, and, at the ſame time, how we ſhall be rendered *like him* by ſeeing him; for in the ſenſe now given, we underſtand the text. SERM. XII.

God is an *immaterial* being. This principle is unanimouſly eſtabliſhed both by the light of nature, and by revealed religion. An immaterial being cannot be *ſeen* by material eyes. This is another inconteſtible principle. It muſt be, then, with the mind, that *we ſhall ſee God as he is*, that is to ſay, we ſhall *know* him. It muſt be the mind, therefore, that muſt be rendered *like him*. This conſequence immediately follows from both our principles; and this conſequence is one ground of our reflections.

God is an *infinite* being. This alſo is a principle eſtabliſhed by both natural and revealed religion. The ſoul of man is finite, and, to what ever perfection it may be advanced, it will always continue to be ſo. This is another indiſputable principle. It would imply a contradiction to affirm, that an infinite ſpirit can be ſeen, or *fully* known, in a ſtrict literal ſenſe, *as it is*, by a finite ſpirit. The human ſoul, therefore, being a finite ſpirit, can never perfectly ſee, that is, fully comprehend, *as he is*, God, who is an infinite ſpirit. The propoſition in our text, then, neceſſarily requires ſome reſtriction. This inference ariſes immediately from the two principles now laid down, and this ſecond conſequence furniſhes another ground of our reflections.

But, although it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe, that God, an infinite ſpirit, can be fully known by a finite human ſpirit, yet there is no abſurdity in affirming, God can *communicate* himſelf to man in a very cloſe and intimate manner proper to transform him. This may be done four ways. There are, we conceive four ſorts of communications; a communication of ideas, a communication of love, a communication of virtue, and a communication of felicity. In theſe four ways,

we

SERM. XII. *we ſhall ſee God*, and by thus ſeeing him *as he is, we ſhall be like him* in theſe four reſpects. We will endeavour by diſcuſſing each of theſe articles to explain them clearly; and here all your attention will be neceſſary, for without this our whole diſcourſe will be nothing to you but a ſound deſtitute of reaſon and ſenſe.

The firſt communication will be a communication of *ideas*. We ſhall *ſee God as he is*, becauſe we ſhall participate his ideas; and by ſeeing God as he is, we ſhall become *like him*, becauſe the knowledge of his ideas will rectify ours, and will render them like his. To know the ideas of an imperfect being is not to participate his imperfections. An accurate mind may know the ideas of an inaccurate mind without admitting them. But to know the ideas of a perfect ſpirit is to participate his perfections; becauſe to know his ideas is to know them as they are, and to know them as they are is to perceive the evidence of them. When, therefore, God ſhall communicate his ideas to us, *we ſhall be like him*, by the conformity of our ideas to his.

What are the ideas of God? They are clear in their nature; they are clear in their images; they are perfect in their degree; they are complex in their relations; and they are complete in their number. In all theſe reſpects the ideas of God are infinitely ſuperior to the ideas of men.

1. Men are full of *falſe* notions. Their ideas are often the very reverſe of the objects, of which they ſhould be clear repreſentations. We have falſe ideas in phyſicks, falſe ideas in polity, falſe ideas in religion. We have falſe ideas of honour and of diſgrace, of felicity and of miſery. Hence we often miſtake fancy for reaſon, and ſhadow for ſubſtance. But God hath only *true* ideas. His idea of order is an exact repreſentation of order. His idea of irregularity exactly anſwers to irregularity;

irregularity; and ſo of all other objects. He will make us know his ideas, and by making us know them he will rectify ours. SERM. XII.

2. Men have often *obſcure* ideas. They ſee only glimmerings. They perceive appearances rather than demonſtrations. They are placed in a world of probabilities, and, in conſideration of this ſtate, in which it hath pleaſed the creator to place them, they have more need of a courſe of reaſoning on a new plan, to teach them how a rational creature ought to conduct himſelf, when he is ſurrounded with probabilities, than of a courſe of reaſoning and determining, which ſuppoſes him ſurrounded with demonſtration. But God hath only *clear* ideas. No veil covers objects; no darkneſs obſcures his ideas of them. When he ſhall *appear*, he will communicate his ideas to us, and they will rectify ours, he will cauſe the ſcales, that hide objects from us, to fall from our eyes; and he will diſſipate the clouds, which prevent our clear conception of them.

3. Men have very few ideas perfect in *degree*. They ſee only the ſurface of objects. Who, in all the world, hath a perfect idea of matter? Who ever had perfect ideas of ſpirit? Who could ever exactly define either? Who was ever able to inform us how the idea of motion reſults from that of body; how the idea of ſenſation reſults from that of ſpirit? Who ever knew to which claſs ſpace belongs? It would be very eaſy, my brethren, to increaſe this liſt, would time permit; and were I not prevented by knowing, that they, who are incapable of underſtanding theſe articles, have already in their own minds pronounced them deſtitute of all ſenſe and reaſon. But God hath *perfect* ideas. His ideas comprehend the whole of all objects. He will communicate to us this diſpoſition of mind, and will give us ſuch a penetration as ſhall enable us to attain the knowledge of the eſſence of beings, and to contemplate them in their whole.

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4. Men have very few ideas *complex* in their relations. I mean, their minds are ſo limited, that, although they may be capable of combining a certain number of ideas, yet they are confounded by combining a greater number. We have diſtinct ideas of units, and we are capable of combining a few: but as ſoon as we add hundred to hundred, million to million, the little capacity of our ſouls is overwhelmed with the multitude of theſe objects, and our weakneſs obliges us to ſink under the weight. We have a few ideas of motion. We know what ſpace a body, to which a certain degree of velocity is communicated, muſt paſs through in a given time: but as ſoon as we ſuppoſe a greater degree of motion, as ſoon as we imagine an augmentation of velocity to this greater degree; as ſoon as we try to apply our knowledge of moving powers to thoſe enormous bodies, which the mighty hand of God guides in the immenſity of ſpace, we are involved in perplexity and confuſion. But God conceives *infinite combinations*. He will make us participate, as far as our minds can, his ideas; ſo that we ſhall be able to give a large expanſe to our meditation without any fear of confuſing ourſelves.

5. In fine, the ideas of mankind are incomplete in their *number*. Moſt men think, there are only two ſorts of beings, body and ſpirit; and they have alſo determined, that there can be only two. A raſh deciſion in itſelf: but more raſh ſtill in a creature ſo confined in his genius as man. But the ideas of God are *complete*. He knows all poſſible beings. He will make us participate this diſpoſition of mind, and from it may ariſe ideas of myriads of beings, on which now we cannot reaſon, becauſe now we have no ideas of them. A communication of ideas is the firſt way, in which God will make himſelf known to us. This will be the firſt trait of our reſemblance of him. *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

The

The ſecond communication of God to a beatified ſoul is a communication of *love*. We cannot poſſibly partake of the ideas of God without participating his love. To participate the ideas of God is to poſſeſs juſt notions. To poſſeſs juſt notions is to place each object in the rank, that is due to it; conſequently, we ſhall regard the chief being as the only object of ſupreme love. SERM. XII.

What is neceſſary to anſwer the idea, that an upright ſoul forms of the lovely? The lovely object muſt anſwer three ideas: the idea of the great and marvellous; the idea of the juſt; and the idea of the good; and, if I may venture to ſpeak ſo, of the beatifying. Now, it is impoſſible to know God without entertaining theſe three ideas of him alone; conſequently it is impoſſible to know God without loving him. And this is the reaſon of our profound admiration of the morality of the goſpel. The morality of the goſpel is the very quinteſſence of order. It informs us, no creature deſerves ſupreme love. It makes this principle the ſubſtance of its laws. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.* Mat. xxii. 37.

How worthy of ſupreme love will this God appear, how fully will he anſwer the idea of the *great* and the *marvellous*, when *we ſhall ſee him as he is!* He will anſwer it by his independence. Creatures exiſt: but they have only a borrowed being. God derives his exiſtence from none. He is a ſelf-exiſtent being. He will anſwer our idea of the magnificent by the immutability of his nature. Creatures exiſt: but they have no fixed and permanent being. They ariſe from nothing to exiſtence. Their exiſtence is rather variation and inconſtancy than real being. But God, but *I the Lord*, ſays he of himſelf, *I change not. The ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.* He is, as it were, the fixed point, on which all creatures revolve, while he Mal. iii. 6. Heb. xiii. 8.

SERM. XII. is neither moved by their motion, ſhaken by their action, nor in the leaſt imaginable degree altered by all their countleſs viciſſitudes. He will anſwer the idea of the great and marvellous by the efficiency of his will. Creatures have ſome efficient acts of volition: but not of themſelves. . . . But go back to that period, in which there was nothing. Figure to yourſelves thoſe immenſe voids, which preceded the formation of the univerſe, and repreſent to yourſelves God alone. He forms the plan of the world. He regulates the whole deſign. He aſſigns an epoch of duration to it in a point of eternity. This act of his will produces this whole univerſe. Hence a ſun, a moon, and ſtars. Hence earth and ſea, rivers and fields. Hence kings, princes, and philoſophers. *He ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt. The heavens were made by the word of the Lord, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth.* God, then, perfectly anſwers our idea of the grand and the marvellous. He anſwers alſo the idea of the juſt.

Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

It was he, who gave us an idea of *juſtice* or order. It was he, who made the greateſt ſacrifices to it. It was he, who moved heaven and earth to re-eſtabliſh it, and who teſtified how dear it was to him by ſacrificing the moſt worthy victim, that could poſſibly ſuffer, I mean his only ſon.

Finally, God will perfectly anſwer our idea of the *good* and the *beatifying*. Who can come up to it except a God, who opens to his creatures an acceſs to his treaſures? A God, who reveals himſelf to them in order to take them away from their *broken ciſterns*, and to conduct them to a *fountain of living waters*. A God, whoſe eternal wiſdom cries to mankind, *Ho, every one, that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he, that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye ſpend money for that, which is not bread? and your labour for that, which ſatisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me,*

Jer. ii. 13.

Iſai. lv. 1, 2, 3.

and

and eat ye that, which is good, and let your ſoul delight it- SERM.
ſelf in fatneſs. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, XII.
and your ſoul ſhall live.

We cannot, then, know God without loving him. And thus a communication of ideas leads to a communication of love. But this communication of love will render us *like* the God, whom we admire. For the property of love, in a ſoul inflamed with it, is to transform it in ſome ſort into the object of its admiration. This is particularly proper to divine love. We love God, becauſe we know his attributes; when we know his attributes, we know, we can no better contribute to the perfection of our being than by imitating them, and the deſire, that we have to perfect our being, will neceſſitate us to apply wholly to imitate them, and to become *like him.*

Let us paſs to our third conſideration. The third communication of God to a beatified ſoul is a communication of his *virtues.* To love and to obey, in Scripture-ſtyle, is the ſame thing. *If ye love me, keep* John xiv. *my commandments,* is a well-known expreſſion of Jeſus 15.
Chriſt. *He, who ſaith I know him, and keepeth not his* 1 John ii. *commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him,* is 4.
an expreſſion of our apoſtle. This is not peculiar to the love of God. To love and to obey, even in civil ſociety, are uſually two things, which have a very cloſe connection. But, as no creature hath ever excited all the love, of which a ſoul is capable, ſo there is no creature, to whom we have rendered a perfect obedience. It is only in regard to God, that there is an inſeparable connection between obedience and love. For when we love God, becauſe we know him, we are ſoon convinced, that he cannot ordain any thing to his creature but what is uſeful to him; when we are convinced, he can ordain nothing to be performed by his creature but what is uſeful to him, it becomes as impoſſible not to obey him as it is not to love ourſelves. To love and obey is one thing, then, when the object

in

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in queſtion is a being ſupremely lovely. Theſe are demonſtrations; but to obey God and to keep his commandments, is to be *like God*.

The commandments of God are formed on the idea of the divine perfections. God hath an idea of order; he loves it; he follows it; and this is all, that he ever hath required, and all, that he ever will require of his intelligent creatures. He requires us to know order, to love it, to follow it. An intelligent creature, therefore, who ſhall be brought to obey the commandments of God, will be *like God*. *Be ye perfect, as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect.* *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* *Every man, that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure.* Theſe precepts are given us here on earth, and we obey them imperfectly now: but we ſhall yield a perfect obedience to them in heaven, when we ſhall *ſee him as he is.* Here, our apoſtle affirms, *Whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, neither known him*; that is to ſay, he who ſuffers ſin to reign over him, doth not know God; for, if he knew God, he would have juſt ideas of God; he would love him; and, if he loved him, he would imitate him. But in heaven we ſhall ſee, and know him, we ſhall not ſin, we ſhall imitate him, *we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

Mat. v. 48. 1 Pet. i. 16. 1 John iii. 3. 6.

Laſtly, the fourth communication of the Deity with beatified ſouls is a communication of *felicity*. In an œconomy of order, to be holy and to be happy are two things very cloſely connected. Now we are in an œconomy of diſorder. Accordingly, virtue and felicity do not always keep company together, and it ſometimes happens, that for *having hope in Chriſt, we are*, for a while, *of all men moſt miſerable.* But this œconomy of diſorder muſt be aboliſhed. Order muſt be eſtabliſhed. S. Peter, ſpeaking of Jeſus Chriſt, ſays, *The heavens muſt receive him until the times of the reſtitution of all things.* When *all things* ſhall be reſtored, virtue and happineſs will be cloſely united, and, conſe-

1 Cor. xv. 19. Acts iii. 21.

conſequently, by participating the holineſs of God we ſhall participate his happineſs.

God is ſupremely good. He is naturally inclined by his own perfections to do good. Rather than include himſelf in his own felicity, he went out of himſelf in the works of creation. He formed creatures capable of his favours. But theſe very perfections, which inclined him to do good, prevent his rendering impure and criminal creatures happy. *He is of purer eyes than to behold evil.* This is the cauſe of the innumerable penal evils, under which we groan. For this reaſon there are miſerable people. Remove this obſtacle, and God will follow his inclination to bounty. All creatures capable of being happy would be rendered perfectly happy. In heaven this obſtacle will be removed. Hab. i. 13.

Moreover, we may offer, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, a more evangelical reaſon to confirm this article. One part of the covenant of grace between the eternal Father and the Son, when the ſon became incarnate, was, that the Father ſhould reſtore them to happineſs, whom the Son ſhould redeem. Hence this adorable Son of God, in the ſacerdotal prayer, which he offered to the Father the evening before he offered himſelf a ſacrifice to death on the croſs, repeats this clauſe of the covenant; *I have manifeſted thy name unto the men, which thou gaveſt me out of the world: thine they they were, and thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word. Father, I will that they alſo, whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* John xviii. 6. 24.

God is, then, inclined by the nature of his perfections, and by the ſpirit of the covenant made with Jeſus Chriſt, to render *like himſelf* in regard to his felicity thoſe, who are already made like him in regard to his ideas, in regard to his love, and in regard to his holineſs; and this is the fourth ſenſe of the propoſition in our text, *We ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he*

SERM. XII. *he is.* This is the fourth communication of God to beatified ſouls. He will communicate his felicity to them. What conſtitutes the felicity of God will conſtitute the felicity of beatified ſouls.

God is happy in contemplating his *works.* He approves all the plans, that his intelligence hath conceived, and which his wiſdom and power have ſo glorioufly executed. *He ſeeth every thing that he hath made, and approves it as very good.* God will diſcover theſe works to beatified ſouls. He will diſplay before them all the pompous decorations of nature. He will direct their attention to the ſymmetry, the magnificence, the number of thoſe luminous bodies, thoſe flaming ſpheres, which appear to our weak eyes at preſent as only ſo many ſparks.

Gen. i. 31.

God is happy in contemplating his *providence*, and the marvellous manner, in which he governs the univerſe. God will diſcover this perfect government to beatified ſouls. Then will appear the folly of the many objections, which at preſent perplex our minds on the darkneſs of providence; then will the many injurious ſuſpicions vaniſh, which we have entertained concerning the government of the world; then will all the ſophiſms be confounded, that raſh human minds have formed concerning the manner, in which God hath diſtributed good and evil.

God is happy in the contemplation of his *deſigns.* The active ſpirit of the firſt great cauſe will diverſify his works infinitely, and for ever; he judgeth of what may be as of what is, and determines of the poſſible world as of that, which actually exiſts, that *all is very good.* He will communicate theſe deſigns to beatified ſouls. *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing, which I do?* ſaid God once to this patriarch. Agreeably to which Jeſus Chriſt ſaid to his Apoſtles, *Henceforth I call you not ſervants: but I have called you friends; for the ſervant knoweth not what his Lord doth: but all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.*

Gen. xviii. 17.

John xv. 15.

God

will hide nothing from beatified ſouls. He will open to them inexhauſtible treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. He will diſplay in their ſight all, that would reſult from them. He will anticipate the future periods of eternity (if we may ſpeak of future periods, when we ſpeak of eternity.) and he will ſhew them every moment of this infinite duration ſignalized by ſome emanation of his excellence. SERM. XII.

God is happy in certain *ſentiments*, which may probably bear ſome analogy to what we call in ourſelves ſenſations. At leaſt, we may aſſure ourſelves, to be rendered capable of pure ſenſations would contribute very much to the perfection and happineſs of our ſouls. Senſations lively, affecting, and delicious, we know, contribute to our preſent felicity. They, who have affected to refine and ſpiritualize our ideas of felicity, and to free them from every thing ſenſitive, I think, have miſtaken the nature of ſpirit. God will impart to beatified ſouls all the ſentiments, of which they are capable. He will make them feel ſomething more harmonious than the beſt compoſitions of muſick; ſomething more delicious than the moſt exquiſite taſtes; and ſo of the reſt. God is happy in the *ſociety* of the ſpirits, which ſurround him. He is the centre of all their felicity. He accepts their adoration and homage. He reflects their ſervices to him on themſelves. God will receive beatified ſouls into this ſociety. He will unite us to angels and ſeraphims, thrones, dominions, and cherubims, and to all other happy intelligent beings, which are without number, and of infinite variety. Their felicity will make our felicity, as our happineſs will make their happineſs. *There will be joy in heaven over* many *repenting ſinners.* Luke xv. 7.

But this ſubject carries me beyond all due bounds. The imagination of a hearer, leſs warmed than that of a preacher, cannot extend itſelf ſo far as he would conduct it. Only recollect, then, and unite the ideas, which we have been mentioning. *We know, when he*

SERM. XII. *ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.*

This paſſage, we ſay, ſeems to offer two ſenſes. The firſt regards the human nature of Jeſus Chriſt. *We ſhall ſee* the glorious body of Jeſus Chriſt, *as it is*; becauſe our bodies, being rendered glorious like his, will have faculties relative to his, and proper to enable us to perceive it.

The other ſenſe regards the Deity. *We ſhall ſee* God, not with the eyes of our bodies, but with the eyes of the mind, that is to ſay, we ſhall know him. *We ſhall ſee God as he is*, not literally and fully, for God is an infinite ſpirit, who cannot be fully comprehended by finite beings: but we ſhall know him, as much as it will be poſſible for us to know him, and our reſemblance to him will bear a proportion to our knowledge of him. He will communicate himſelf to us. There will be four communications between God and beatified ſouls; a communication of ideas, of love, of holineſs, and of happineſs.

And, what deſerves our particular regard, becauſe it is moſt admirable, is, that theſe four communications are connected together, and flow from one another. Becauſe we ſhall *ſee God as he is, we ſhall be like him.* Becauſe we ſhall know his ideas, we ſhall be poſſeſſed of a rectitude of thought like his. Becauſe we ſhall poſſeſs a rectitude of thought like his, we ſhall know, that he is ſupremely lovely, and cannot but love him. Becauſe we cannot help loving him, we cannot help imitating his holy conduct, as holineſs will appear the perfection of our nature. Becauſe we ſhall imitate his holineſs, we ſhall participate his happineſs; for he is naturally inclined by his own perfections to render thoſe intelligent beings happy like himſelf, who like him are in a ſtate of order. The three laſt communications are then immediate conſequences of the firſt, and the firſt is the ground of the reſt; *we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he*

he is. Then will all the divine plan of human redemption by Jeſus Chriſt be fully executed. Then all the privileges of our adoption, and of the love, that elevated us to a condition ſo noble and glorious, will clearly appear. *Behold! what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God! Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, that, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* SERM. XII.

This is the plan of God in regard to man: a plan diametrically oppoſite to that of Satan. The plan of Satan is to render man like Satan. The plan of God is to render man like God. Satan hath been too ſucceſsful in the execution of his deſign. *A liar and a murderer from the beginning*; he ſeduced our firſt parents; he made them fall from truth to error, from error to vice; already he hath robbed us of the glory of our firſt innocence; already he hath darkened our underſtandings; already ſucceeded in making us find that pleaſure in vice, which ought to follow virtue only; and, having communicated his vice to us, he hath made us participate his miſeries; hence the air becomes infected, hence the ocean becomes a grave to mariners, hence animals rebel againſt him, who was originally appointed to be their lord and king, hence paſſion, revenge and hatred, which begin a hell upon earth, hence maladies which conſume our days in pain, and death, that moſt formidable weapon of the devil, to put a period to them, and hence *the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone*, in which this wicked ſpirit will ſtrive to alleviate the pain of his own puniſhment by the infernal pleaſure of having companions of his miſery. John viii. 44. Rev. xxi. 8.

The plan of the Son of God is oppoſite to that of Satan; *for this purpoſe was the Son of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.* Theſe words almoſt immediately follow the text. Already 1 John iii. 8.

SERM. XII. this adorable Son hath reconciled mankind to God by rendering the Deity acceſſible, by taking on him the nature, and the innocent infirmities of men; already he hath appeaſed by his ſacrifice the juſt wrath of a God, who, to puniſh men for imitating Satan, was about to deliver them up to him; and already hath he given the death-wound to the empire of this uſurper
Col. ii. 15. of the rights of God; *having ſpoiled principalities and powers, he made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in the croſs.* The ſon of God hath already elevated the chriſtian above the viciſſitudes of life, by detaching him from life, and by teaching him the bleſſed art of deriving advantages from his miſeries; already he hath diſſipated the darkneſs of error, by cauſing the light of revelation to rectify all the abuſes, that even the greateſt philoſophers made of the light of nature; already hath he attacked human depravity at its centre, and ſeparated the ſouls of the elect from
1 John iii. 9. the ſeeds of ſin, by cauſing *his ſeed to remain in them, ſo that they cannot ſin, becauſe they are born of God*, as our apoſtle expreſſeth it; already he hath imparted to their
Phil. iv. 7. conſciences that *peace of God, which paſſeth all under-*
Eph. ii. 6. *ſtanding*, and by which they are *raiſed up together, and made to ſit together in heavenly places in Chriſt Jeſus*; al-
2 Pet. i. 4. ready he hath made them *partakers of the divine nature*;
2 Cor. iii. 18. and he hath already *changed them into the ſame image from glory to glory by his ſpirit.* He is preparing to finiſh his work. Shortly he will make that ſecond appearance, which is the object of the hopes of his
Rev. xxii. 20. churches, and for which his children cry, *Come Lord Jeſus! come quickly!* Shortly he will reduce to duſt
1 Cor. xv. 50. theſe organs, this *fleſh and blood*, which *cannot inherit the kingdom of God.* Shortly he will raiſe theſe bodies from the duſt with new faculties. Shortly he will remove the veils, that hide the eſſence of the Creator from us, and will ſhew it to us *as it is*, ſo that we may be rendered *like it.* Theſe are two very differen plans, my brethren; the one is the plan of God, the other

other that of the devil; the one is the deſign of the enemy of mankind, the other that of their Redeemer. SERM. XII.

Into which of theſe two plans do ye propoſe to enter? Into the plan of God, or into that of the devil? Which of theſe two beings do ye wiſh to reſemble? Would ye be *like God*, or would ye have the features of Satan? This queſtion may perhaps be already anſwered by ſome of you. Great God! to what are we reduced, to be obliged to ſuppoſe, at leaſt to have great reaſon to fear, that, in this church, built for the aſſembly of *ſaints, and for the edifying of the body of Chriſt*, there are any imitators of the devil! To what are we reduced, to be obliged to ſuppoſe, at leaſt to have juſt grounds of fear, that in this aſſembly, compoſed of children of God, who come to appear in his preſence, there are any children of the devil! But the frightful in a ſuppoſition does not take away the poſſibility of it. Eph. iv. 21

Perhaps the queſtion may have been fully anſwered already by ſome of our hearers. What idea muſt we form of a man, who employs all his talents to enervate truth, to attack religion, to render doubtful the being of a God; who attributes the creation of the world to blind chance; and brings into queſtion the reality of a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments? What idea muſt be formed of a man, who employs himſelf wholly in increaſing his fortune and eſtabliſhing his family, how iniquitous ſoever the means may be, which contribute to his end; who robs the widow and the orphan, embroils the ſtate, elevates to the moſt eminent poſts in ſociety, men who hardly deſerve to live; who would ſubvert this whole republick, and erect a throne for himſelf and his family on its ruins? What muſt we think of a man, who daily blaſphemes the God of heaven, and inceſſantly pours out murmurs and charges againſt the governor of the univerſe? What can we think of a man, who

wallows

SERM. XII. wallows in debauchery, who, in ſpite of thoſe penalties of ſin, which he bears about in his body, in ſpite of the infection and putrefaction, that his infamous laſciviouſneſs has cauſed in his body, indemnifies himſelf for his preſent pains by repeating his former pleaſures, and yet ſearches among the ruins of his mortal body ſome portion, that, having eſcaped the puniſhment of his crimes, may yet ſerve his unbridled concupiſcence? Were ſuch men deſcended from the moſt illuſtrious anceſtors; had they, like Lucifer himſelf, an heavenly origin; did their power equal that of the prince of air; were their attendants as numerous as the legions of that miſerable ſpirit; could their riches and affluence raiſe winds and ſtorms, that would ſhake the whole world; had they in their hands the ſword of juſtice, and were they conſidered as *gods* upon earth, and *children of the moſt high*; I ſhould not be afraid to ſay, while they abandon themſelves to theſe exceſſes, I deteſt, and abhor them as devils.

Pſal. lxxxii. 6.

But ye, my brethren, ye, who ought to be the moſt holy part of the church; ye, who pretend to glory in bearing the name of chriſtian, and who aſpire after all the privileges and recompences of chriſtianity; into which of the two plans do ye propoſe to enter? Into the plan of Satan, or into that of God? Which of the two beings do ye wiſh to reſemble? Would ye reſemble God, or would ye bear the features of the devil? Let not the mortifying in this queſtion prevent your examination of it? It is far better to acknowledge a mortifying truth, than to perſiſt in a flattering falſhood.

The purpoſe of God, as we juſt now ſaid, is to render us *like himſelf*, by communicating his knowledge, by imparting ſound ideas to us. Do ye enter into this deſign? Are ye labouring to form this feature, ye, who neglect the cultivation of your minds; ye, who ſuffer yourſelves to be enſlaved by prejudice; ye, who, ſo far from being teachable, are angry when we attempt to remove your errors, and, conſider

thoſe

thoſe as your enemies, who tell you the truth? The design of God, we juſt now told you, is to render us *like himſelf* by communicating his love to us. Do ye enter into this plan? Are ye endeavouring to form this feature, ye, who feel no other flame than that, which wordly objects kindle, and which the ſcripture calls *enmity with God*; ye, who at the moſt perform only ſome exterior duties and ceremonies of religion, and dedicate to theſe only a few hours on a Lord's-day, and who lay out all your vigour and zeal, performances, emotions and paſſions on the world? The deſign of God, we ſaid, is to render us *like himſelf* by enabling us to imitate his holineſs. Do ye enter into this part of his deſign? Do ye deſire to reſemble God, ye, who conform to this preſent world; ye, who *run with them to the ſame exceſs of riot*; ye, who ſacrifice your ſouls to faſhion and cuſtom? The deſign of God, we told you, is to render us *like himſelf* by communicating his felicity to us. Do ye enter into this part of his plan? Are ye labouring to attain this reſemblance of the deity? Are ye ſeeking a divine felicity? Do ye place *your hearts where your treaſure is?* Do ye *ſeek thoſe things which are above?* Ye, who are all taken up with worldly attachments, ye, who are endeavouring by reputation, and riches, and worldly grandeurs, to faſten yourſelves for ever to the world as to the centre of human felicity; ye, whoſe little ſouls are all confined to the narrow circle of the preſent life; ye, who turn pale, when we ſpeak of dying; ye, who ſhudder, when we treat of that eternal gulf, on the brink of which ye ſtand, and which is juſt ready to ſwallow you up in everlaſting woe; do ye enter into the deſign of participating the felicity of God?

SERM. XII.

James iv. 4.

1 Pet. iv. 4.

Mat. vi. 21. Col. iii. 1.

Let us not deceive ourſelves, my brethren! We cannot ſhare the ſecond transformation, unleſs we partake of the firſt; if we would be *like God* in heaven, we muſt reſemble him here in his church below. A ſoul, having theſe firſt features, experiencing this firſt

trans-

SERM. XII. transformation, is prepared for eternity; when it enters heaven, it will not alter its condition, it will only perfect it. The moſt beautiful object, that can preſent itſelf to the eyes of ſuch a ſoul, is the divine Redeemer, the model of its virtues, the original of its ideas. Haſt thou experienced the firſt transformation? Haſt thou already theſe features? Doſt thou ardently deſire the appearance of the Son of God; and, ſhould God preſent himſelf to thee *as he is*, couldſt thou bear the ſight without trembling and horror? Ah, my brethren! how miſerable is a mind, when it conſiders him as an object of horror, whom it ought to conſider as an object of its deſire and love! How miſera-
2 Tim. iv. 8. ble is a ſoul, which, inſtead of *loving the appearing of the Lord, the righteous judge*, as S. Paul expreſſeth it, hath juſt reaſons to dread it! How wretched is the
Rev. xxii. 20. caſe of the man, who, inſtead of crying, *Come Lord Jeſus! come quickly!* cries, Put off thy coming; defer a period, the approach of which I cannot bear; thy coming will be the time of my deſtruction; thine appearing will diſcover my ſhame; thy glory will be my deſpair; thy voice will be the ſentence of my eternal miſery; inſtead of haſtening to meet thee, I
Pſal. cxxxix. 7. Rev. vi. 16. will avoid thy preſence; I will ſtrive to *flee from thy ſpirit*, I will call to my relief the *mountains* and the *rocks*, and, provided they can conceal me from thy terrible preſence, it will ſignify nothing, ſhould they cruſh me by their fall, and bury me for ever in their ruins!

Let not ſuch frightful ſentiments ever revolve in our minds, chriſtians. Let us now begin the great work of our transformation. Let us commune with God. Let us apply all our efforts to obtain the knowledge of him. Let us kindle in our ſouls the fire of his love. Let us propoſe his holineſs for our example. Let us anticipate the felicity of heaven. Indeed, we ſhall often be interrupted in this great work. We ſhall often find reaſon to deplore the darkneſs, which obſcures

obſcures our ideas, the chilling damps, that cool our love, the vices, that mix with our virtues; and the grief, which theſe imperfections will cauſe, will frequently lower our felicity. But hope will ſupply the place of full fruition. Our ſouls will be all involved in evangelical conſolations, and all our bitterneſſes will be ſweetened with theſe thoughts of our apoſtle, *Behold! what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: but we know, that, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* To him be honour and glory for ever. Amen. SERM. XII.

SER-

SERMON XIII.

HELL.

SERMON XIII.

SERMON XIII.

HELL.

REVELATIONS XIV. 11.

And the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever.

VIOLENT diſeaſes require violent remedies. This is an inconteſtible maxim in the ſcience of the human body, and it is equally true in religion, the ſcience, that regards the ſoul. If a wound be deep, it is in vain to heal the ſurface, the malady would become the more dangerous, becauſe it would ſpread inwardly, gain the nobler parts, conſume the vitals, and ſo become incurable. Such a wound muſt be cleanſed, probed, cut, and cauterized; and, ſoftening the moſt terrible pains by exciting in the patient a hope of being healed, he muſt be perſuaded to endure a momentary pain in order to obtain a future firm eſtabliſhed health. Thus in religion; when vice hath gained the heart, and ſubdued all the faculties of the ſoul, in vain do we place before the ſinner a few ideas of equity; in vain do we diſplay the magnificence of the heavens, the beauties of the church, and the charms of virtue; *the arrows of the Almighty* muſt be faſtened in him; Job vi. 4. *terrors, as in a ſolemn day, muſt be called round about* him; Lam. ii. and, *knowing the terrors of the Lord, we* muſt *perſuade* the 22. man, as the holy ſcriptures expreſs it.

My

SERM. XIII. My brethren, let us not waſte our time in declaiming againſt the manners of the times. Let us not exaggerate the depravity of chriſtian ſocieties, and paſs encomiums on former ages by too cenſoriouſly condemning our own. Mankind have always been bad enough, and good people have always been too ſcarce. There are, however, we muſt allow, ſome times, and ſome places, in which Satan hath employed more means, and hath ſtriven with more ſucceſs to execute his fatal deſign of deſtroying mankind than in others. Obſerve this reflection. A violent malady muſt have a violent remedy; and this, which we bring you to day, certainly excels in its kind. The holy Spirit conducts us to day in a road different from that, in which he formerly led the Hebrews; and, to addreſs you properly, we muſt change the order of S. Paul's words, and ſay, *Ye are* not *come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jeruſalem: but ye are . . . . come unto a burning fire, unto blackneſs, and darkneſs, and tempeſt.* We are going to place before your eyes eternity with its abyſſes, the fiery lake with its flames, devils with their rage, and hell with its horrors.

xii. 22.

Great God! ſuſpend for a few moments the *ſmall ſtill voice* of thy goſpel! For a few moments let not this auditory hear the church *ſhouting, Grace, grace unto it!* Let the bleſſed angels, that aſſiſt in our aſſemblies, for a while leave us to attend to the miſeries of the damned! I ſpeak literally; I wiſh theſe miſerable beings could ſhew you for a moment the weight of their chains, the voracity of their flames, the ſtench of their ſmoke. Happy! if ſtruck with theſe frightful objects, we imbibe a holy horror, and henceforth oppoſe againſt all our temptations the words of our text, *the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever!*

1 Kings xix. 12.

Zech. iv. 7.

I have borrowed theſe words of S. John. In the preceding verſes he had been ſpeaking of apoſtates and idolaters, and them he had particularly in view in this;

this; *If any man worſhip the beaſt, and his image, and re-* SERM.
ceive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the ſame XIII.
ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy angels, and in the preſence of the lamb; and the ſmoke of their torment, adds the apoſtle in the text, *aſcendeth up for ever and ever.*

But do not think, this ſentence muſt be reſtrained to theſe ſorts of ſinners. It is denounced againſt other kinds of ſinners in other paſſages of ſcripture. *His fan is in his hand*, ſaid the forerunner of Jeſus Chriſt, *and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* Mat. iii. 12

It ſhall not be, then, to apoſtates, and idolaters only, that we will preach to day; although, alas! was it ever more neceſſary to ſpeak to them than now? Did any age of chriſtianity ever ſee ſo many apoſtates as this, for which providence hath reſerved us? O! could I tranſport myſelf to the ruins of our churches! I would thunder in the ears of our brethren, who have denied their faith and religion, the words of our apoſtle; *If any man worſhip the beaſt, and his image, he ſhall be tormented with fire and brimſtone, and the ſmoke of his torment ſhall aſcend up for ever and ever!*

We will conſider our text in a more general view, and we divide our diſcourſe into three parts.

I. We will prove, that the doctrine of eternal puniſhment is clearly revealed.

II. We will examine the objections, which reaſon oppoſes againſt it; and we will ſhew, that there is nothing in it incompatible with the perfections of God, or the nature of man.

III. We will addreſs the ſubject to ſuch as admit the truth of the doctrine of eternal puniſhments: but live in indolence, and unaffected with it. This is the whole plan of this diſcourſe.

I.

SERM. XIII.

I. We affirm, there is a hell, puniſhments finite in degree: but infinite in duration. We do not intend to eſtabliſh here in a vague manner, that there is a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments, by laying before you the many weighty arguments taken from the ſentiments of conſcience, the declarations of ſcripture, the confuſions of ſociety, the unanimous conſent of mankind, and the attributes of God himſelf; arguments, which, placing in the cleareſt light the truth of a judgment to come, and a future ſtate, ought for ever to confound thoſe unbelievers and libertines, who glory in doubting both. We are going to addreſs ourſelves more immediately to another ſort of people, who do not deny the truth of future puniſhments: but who diminiſh the duration of them; who, either in regard to the attributes of God, or in favour of their own indolence, endeavour to perſuade themſelves, that, if there be any puniſhments after death, they will neither be ſo general, nor ſo long, nor ſo terrible, as people imagine.

Of this ſort was that father in the primitive church, who was ſo famous for the extent of his genius, and at the ſame for the extravagance of it; admired on the one hand for attacking and refuting the errors of the enemies of religion, and blamed on the other for injuring the very religion, that he defended, by mixing with it errors monſtrous in their kind, and almoſt infinite in their number.* He affirmed, that eternal puniſhments were incompatible both with the perfections of God, and that inſtability, which is the eſſential character of creatures; and, mixing ſome chimeras with his errors, he added, that ſpirits, after they had been purified by the fire of hell, would return to the boſom of God, that at length they would detach themſelves from him, and that God to puniſh their inconſtancy would lodge them again in new bodies, and that thus eternity would be nothing but periodical revolutions of time. Such

* Origen.

Such alſo were ſome Jewiſh Rabbies, who acknowledge, in general, that there is a hell: but add, there is no place in it for Iſraelites, not even for the moſt criminal of them, excepting only thoſe, who abjure Judaiſm; and even theſe, they think, after they have ſuffered for one year, will be abſolutely annihilated. SERM. XIII.

Such was, almoſt in our own days, the head of a famous ſect, and ſuch were many of his diſciples. They thought, the ſouls of all men, good and bad, paſſed into a ſtate of inſenſibility at death, with this difference only, that the wicked ceaſe to be, and are abſolutely annihilated, whereas the righteous will riſe again into ſenſibility in a future period, and will be united to a glorious body; that thoſe wicked perſons, who ſhall be alive, when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come to judge the world, will be the only perſons, who will appear in judgment to receive their condemnation there; and that theſe, after they ſhall have been abſorbed in the general conflagration, which, they ſay, is the *gehenna*, or *hell-fire*, of which ſcripture ſpeaks, will be annihilated with the devils and the fires of hell; ſo that, according to them, nothing will remain in nature but the abode of happy ſpirits. Mat. v. 22.

Such are the ſuppoſitions of thoſe, who oppoſe the doctrine, that we are going to eſtabliſh. Let us endeavour to refute them.

1. Scripture gives no countenance to this abſurd opinion, that the wicked ſhall have no part in reſurrection and judgment. What could S. Paul mean by theſe words, *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of the goodneſs of God? after thy hardneſs, and impenitent heart, doſt thou treaſure up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?* What does he mean by theſe words, *We muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad?* What does S. John intend by theſe words, *I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand* Rom. ii. 4, 5. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12, 13, 15.

SERM. XIII. *ſtand before God, the ſea gave up the dead, which were in it, and they were judged every man according to their works;* John v. 28, 29. *and whoſoever was not found written in the book of life was caſt into the lake of fire?* What meant Jeſus Chriſt, when he ſaid, *The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and ſhall come forth: they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation?* Any thing may be gloſſed over, and varniſhed: but was ever gloſs more abſurd than that of ſome, who pretend, that the *reſurrection* ſpoken of in the laſt quoted words is not to be underſtood of a literal proper reſurrection: but of ſanctification, which is often called a reſurrection in ſcripture? Does ſanctification then raiſe ſome *unto a reſurrection of life, and* others *unto a reſurrection of damnation?*

2. Scripture clearly affirms, that the puniſhment of the damned ſhall not conſiſt of annihilation: but of real and ſenſible pain. This appears by divers paſ- Mat. xxvi. 24. ſages. Our Saviour, ſpeaking of Judas, ſaid, *It would have been good for that man, if he had not been born.* Hence we infer, a ſtate worſe than annihilation was reſerved for this miſerable traitor; for had the puniſhment of his crime conſiſted in annihilation only, Judas, having already enjoyed many pleaſures in this life, would have been happier to have been than not to have Mat. xi. 24. been. Again, Jeſus Chriſt ſays, *It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.* Hence we infer again, there are ſome puniſhments worſe than annihilation; for if Sodom and Capernaum were both annihilated, it would not be true, that the one would be in a *more tolerable* ſtate than the other.

Scripture-images of hell, which are many, will not allow us to confine future puniſhment to annihilation. It is a *worm*, a *fire*, a *darkneſs*; they are *chains*, *weeping*, *wailing*, and *gnaſhing of teeth*; expreſſions which we will explain by and by. Accordingly, the diſciples of the head of the ſect juſt now mentioned, and whoſe

whoſe ſyſtem we oppoſe, have renounced theſe two parts of their maſter's doctrine, and, neither denying the generality of theſe puniſhments, nor the reality of them, are content to oppoſe their eternity. SERM. XIII.

But, 3. It appears by ſcripture, that future puniſhment will be eternal. The holy ſcripture repreſents another life as a ſtate, in which there will be no room for repentance and mercy, and where the wicked ſhall know nothing but torment and deſpair. It compares the duration of the miſery of the damned with the duration of the felicity of the bleſſed. Future puniſhment is always ſaid to be eternal, and there is not the leaſt hint given of its coming to an end. *Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Mat. xxv. 41. *Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* Mark ix. 44. *If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than, having two hands, to be caſt into everlaſting fire.* Mat. xviii. 8. *The devil, that deceived them, was caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone, where the beaſt, and the falſe prophet are, and ſhall be tormented day and night for ever.* Rev. xx. 10. Again in our text, *the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever.* Theſe declarations are formal and expreſs.

But, as the word *eternal* doth not always ſignify proper and literal eternity, it is preſumed, the ſpirit of God did not intend, by attributing eternity to future puniſhment, ſtrictly and literally to affirm, that future puniſhment ſhould never end: but only that it ſhould endure many ages.

We grant, my brethren, the word eternal does not always ſignify properly and literally eternity. It has ſeveral meanings: but there are three principal. Sometimes eternity is attributed to thoſe beings, which are as old as the world. Thus we read of *everlaſting hills*, or *mountains of eternity*. Gen. xlix. Sometimes it is put for a duration as long as the nature of the thing in queſtion can permit. Thus it is ſaid, A ſervant, who would not accept his liberty in the ſeventh year of his ſervitude, ſhould ſerve his maſter *for ever*; that is, untill the time of Exod. xxi. 6.

SERM. XIII.

of the Jubilee, for then the Jewiſh republic was new modelled, and all ſlaves were ſet free. Sometimes it expreſſes any thing perfect in its kind, and which hath no ſucceſſion. Thus the ſacrifice of Melchiſedech, and that of Jeſus Chriſt, of which the firſt was a ſha-

Heb. vii. 3. dow, *abide continually*, or *for ever*. This term, then, muſt be taken in a metaphorical ſenſe in the three following caſes.

1. *When that, which is called eternal in one place, is ſaid in another to come to an end.* Thus, it was ſaid, the ceremonial law was to endure *for ever*. This expreſſion muſt not be taken literally; for all the prophets informed their countrymen, that the ceremonial œconomy was to end, and to give up to a better. Now the holy ſcripture does not reſtrain in any one paſſage what it eſtabliſheth in others concerning the eternity of future puniſhments.

2. A metaphorical ſenſe muſt be given to the term, *when the ſacred hiſtory aſſures us, that what it calls eternal has actually come to an end.* Thus, it is plain, the

Jude 7. *fire* of Sodom was not *eternal*; for ſacred hiſtory informs us, it was extinguiſhed after it had conſumed that wicked city, and it is called *eternal*, only becauſe it burned till Sodom was all reduced to aſhes. But what hiſtory can engage us to underſtand in this ſenſe the eternity attributed to the torments of the wicked?

3. The term muſt be taken metaphorically, *when the ſubject ſpoken of is not capable of a proper eternal duration*, as in the caſe juſt now mentioned, that a mortal ſervant ſhould *eternally* ſerve a mortal maſter. But, we preſume, the eternity of future puniſhment in a ſtrict literal ſenſe implies no contradiction, and perfectly agrees with the objects of our contemplation. This leads us to our ſecond part, in which we are to examine thoſe objections, which reaſon oppoſes againſt the doctrine of eternal puniſhment.

II. If

II. If the doctrine of eternal puniſhment imply a contradiction, it muſt either regard man, the ſufferer of the pain, or God, who threatens to inflict it. SERM. XIII.

1. The *nature of man* hath nothing incongruous with that degree and duration of puniſhment, of which we ſpeak. Turn your attention to the following reflections.

Nothing but an expreſs act of the will of God can annihilate a ſoul. No perſon in the world can aſſure himſelf, without a divine revelation, that God will do this act. Whatever we ſee, and know of our ſoul, its hopes and fears, its hatred and love, all afford a preſumption, that it is made for an eternity of happineſs or miſery.

The will of God is the only cauſe of the ſenſations of our ſouls, that alone eſtabliſheth a commerce between motion and ſenſation, ſenſation and motion. His will alone is the cauſe, that from a ſeparation of the component parts of the hand by the action of fire there reſults a ſenſation of pain in the ſoul; ſo that, ſhould it pleaſe him to unite a condemned ſoul to particles of inextinguiſhable fire, and ſhould there reſult from the activity of this fire violent anguiſh in the ſoul, there would be nothing in all this contrary to daily natural experiment.

Farther, weigh particularly the following reflection. Chooſe, of all the ſyſtems of philoſophers, that, which appears moſt reaſonable; believe the ſoul is ſpiritual, believe it is matter; think, it muſt naturally diſſolve with the body, believe, it muſt ſubſiſt after the ruin of the body; take which ſide ye will, ye can never deny this principle, nor do I know, that any philoſopher hath ever denied it: that is, that God is able to preſerve ſoul and body for ever, were they periſhable by nature; and this act of his will would be equal to a continual creation. Now, this principle being granted, all arguments drawn from the nature of man to prove its incongruity with the ſcripture idea of eternal puniſhment vaniſh of themſelves. But

SERM. XIII. But Origen did not enter into theſe reflections. With all that fertility of genius, which enabled him to compoſe (if we believe S. Epiphanius.*) ſix thouſand books, and in ſpite of all his Greek and Hebrew, he was a ſorry philoſopher, and a very bad divine. The church has condemned his doctrine in the groſs. All his philoſophy was taken from the ideas of Plato: but, thanks be to God! my brethren, we live in ages more enlightned, and were educated by maſters wiſer than Ariſtotle and Plato. So much ſhall ſuffice for objections taken from the nature of man.

2. Let us attend now to others taken from *the nature of God*. A man, who oppoſeth our doctrine, reaſons in this manner. Which way ſoever I conſider a being ſupremely perfect, I cannot perſuade myſelf, that he will expoſe his creatures to eternal torments. All his perfections ſecure me from ſuch terrors as this doctrine ſeems to inſpire. If I conſider the deity as a being perfectly free, it ſhould ſeem, although he have denounced ſentences of condemnation, yet he retains a right of revoking, or of executing them to the utmoſt rigour; whence I infer, that no man can determine what uſe he will make of his liberty. When I conſider God as a good being, I cannot make eternal puniſhment agree with infinite mercy; *bowels of compaſſion* ſeem incongruous with *devouring flames*; the titles *merciful and gracious* ſeem incompatible with the execution of this ſentence, *depart ye curſed into everlaſting fire*. In ſhort, when I conſider God under the idea of an equitable legiſlator, I cannot comprehend how ſins committed in a finite period can deſerve an infinite puniſhment. Let us ſuppoſe a life the moſt long and criminal, that ever was; let the vices of all mankind be aſſembled, if poſſible, in one man; let the duration of his corruption be extended from the beginning of the world to the diſſolution of it; even in this caſe ſin would be finite, and infinite

Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Mat. xxv. 41.

* Adverſ. Hæreſ. lib. 2.

infinite everlaſting puniſhment would far exceed the demerit of finite tranſgreſſion, and conſequently, the doctrine of everlaſting puniſhment is inconſiſtent with divine juſtice. SERM. XIII.

There are libertines, who invent theſe difficulties, and take pains to confirm themſelves in the belief of them, in order to diminiſh thoſe juſt fears, which an idea of hell would excite in their ſouls, and to enable them to ſin boldly. Let us not enter into a detail of anſwers and replies with people of this kind. Were we to grant all they ſeem to require, it would be eaſy to prove to a demonſtration, that there is a world of extravagance in deriving the leaſt liberty to ſin from theſe objections. If, inſtead of a puniſhment enduring for ever, hell were only the ſuffering of a thouſand years torments, were the ſufferer during theſe thouſand years only placed in the condition of a man excruciated with the gout or the ſtone; muſt not a man give up all claim to common ſenſe, before he could, even on theſe ſuppoſitions, abandon himſelf to ſin? Are not all the charms employed by the devil to allure us to ſin abſorbed in the idea of a thouſand years pain, to which, for argument's ſake, we have ſuppoſed eternal puniſhment reduced? How pitiable is a man in dying agonies, who has nothing to oppoſe againſt the terrors of death but this opinion, Perhaps hell may be leſs in degree, and ſhorter in duration than the ſcriptures repreſent!

Some chriſtian divines, in zeal for the glory of God, have yielded to theſe objections; and, under pretence of having met with timorous people, whom the doctrine of eternal puniſhment had terrified into doubts concerning the divine perfections, they thought it their duty to remove this ſtumbling block. They have ventured to preſume, that the idea, which God hath given of eternal puniſhment, was only intended to alarm the impenitent, and that it was very probable God would at laſt relax the rigorous ſentence. But if

it

SERM. XIII. it were allowed, that God had no other deſign in denouncing eternal puniſhments than that of alarming ſinners, would it become us to oppoſe his wiſe purpoſe, and with our unhallowed hands to throw down the batteries, which he had erected againſt ſin? Shall we pretend to dive into his myſterious views? or, having, as it were, extorted his confidence, ſhould we be ſo indiſcreet as to publiſh it, like the bold adventurer in the fable, who, not content with having ſtolen fire from heaven for himſelf, endeavoured to encourage other men to do ſo? Let us *think ſoberly*, and *not more highly than we ought to think*; *let us not think above that, which is written.* Let us preach the goſpel as God hath revealed it. God did not think, the doctrine of everlaſting puniſhment injurious to the holineſs of his attributes. Let not us pretend to think it will injure them.

Rom. xii. 3.
1 Cor. iv. 6.

None of theſe reflections remove the difficulty. We proceed then to open four ſources of ſolutions.

1. Obſerve this general truth. It is not probable, God would threaten mankind with a puniſhment, the infliction of which would be incompatible with his perfections. If the reality of ſuch a hell as the ſcriptures deſcribe be inconſiſtent with the perfections of the creator, ſuch a hell ought not to have been affirmed, yea it could not have been revealed. The eminence of the holineſs of God will not allow him to terrify his creatures with the idea of a puniſhment, which he cannot inflict without injuſtice; and, conſidering the weakneſs of our reaſon, and the narrow limits of our knowledge, we ought not to ſay, Such a thing is unjuſt, therefore it is not revealed: but, on the contrary, we ſhould rather ſay, Such a thing is revealed, therefore it is juſt.

2. Take each part of the objection drawn from the attributes of God, and ſaid to deſtroy our doctrine, and conſider it ſeparately. The argument taken from the liberty of God would carry us from error to error,

error, and from one abſurdity to another. For, if SERM. God be free to relax any part of the puniſhment de- XIII. nounced, he is equally free to relax the whole. If we may infer, that he will certainly releaſe the ſufferer from a part, becauſe he is at liberty to do ſo, we have an equal right to preſume he will releaſe from the whole, and there would be no abſurdity in affirming the one, after we had allowed the other. If there be no abſurdity in preſuming that God will releaſe the whole puniſhment denounced againſt the impenitent, behold! all ſyſtems of conſcience, providence, and religion fall of themſelves, and, if theſe ſyſtems fall, what, pray, become of all theſe perfections of God, which ye pretend to defend?

The objection taken from the liberty of God might ſeem to have ſome colour, were hell ſpoken of only in paſſages where precepts were enforced by threatenings: but attend to the places, in which Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks of it. Read, for example, the twenty-fifth of Matthew, and there, ye will perceive, are facts, prophecies, and exact and circumſtantial narrations. There it is ſaid, the world ſhall end, Jeſus Chriſt ſhall deſcend from heaven, there ſhall be a judgment of mankind, the righteous ſhall be rewarded, the wicked ſhall be puniſhed, *ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment.* How can theſe things be reconciled to the truth of God, if he fail to execute any one of theſe articles?

The difficulty taken from the goodneſs of God vaniſheth, when we rectify popular notions of this excellence of the divine nature. Goodneſs in men is a virtue of conſtitution, which makes them ſuffer, when they ſee their fellow creatures in miſery, and which excites them to relieve them. In God it is a perfection independent in its origin, free in its execution, and always reſtrained by laws of inviolable equity, and exact ſeverity.

Juſtice is not incompatible with eternal puniſhment. It is not to be granted, that a ſin committed in a

SERM. XIII. limited time ought not to be puniſhed through an infinite duration. It is not the length of time employed in committing a crime, that determines the degree and the duration of its puniſhment, it is the turpitude and atrociouſneſs of it. The juſtice of God, far from oppoſing the puniſhment of the impenitent, requires it. Conſider this earth, which ſupports us, that ſun, which illuminates us, the aliments, that nouriſh us, all the creatures, which ſerve us; are they not ſo many motives to men to devote their ſervice to God? Conſider the patience of God, what opportunities of repentance he gives ſinners, what motives and means he affords them. Above all, enter into the ſanctuary; meditate on the incarnate word, comprehend, if ye Phil. ii. 7. can, what it is for a God to *make himſelf of no reputation*, and to *take upon him the form of a ſervant*. Conſider the infinite excellence of God, approach his throne, behold his eyes ſparkling with fire, the power and majeſty, that fill his ſanctuary, the heavenly hoſts, which around his throne fulfill his will; form, if it be poſſible, ſome idea of the ſupreme Being. Then think, this God united himſelf to mortal fleſh, and ſuffered for mankind all the rigours, that the madneſs of men, and the rage of devils could invent. I cannot tell, my brethren, what impreſſions theſe objects make on you. For my part, I ingenuouſly own, that, could any thing render chriſtianity doubtful to me, what it affirms of this myſtery would do ſo. I have need, I declare, of all my faith, and of all the authority of him, who ſpeaks in ſcripture, to perſuade me, that God would condeſcend to ſuch an humiliation as this. If, amidſt the darkneſs, which conceals this myſtery, I diſcover any glimmering, that reduces it in a ſort to my capacity, it ariſeth from the ſentence of eternal puniſhment, which God has threatened to inflict on all, who finally reject this great ſacrifice. Having allowed the obligations, under which the incarnation lays mankind, everlaſting puniſhment ſeems to me to have nothing

nothing in it contrary to divine juſtice. No, the burning lake with its ſmoke, eternity with its abyſſes, devils with their rage, and all hell with all its horrors, ſeem to me not at all too rigorous for the puniſhment of men, who have *trodden under foot the Son of God, counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, crucified the Son of God afreſh, and done deſpite unto the ſpirit of grace.* Were we to examine in this manner each part of the objection oppoſed againſt our doctrine, we ſhould open a ſecond ſource of ſolutions to anſwer it. SERM. XIII. Heb. x. 29. vi. 6.

3. The doctrine of degrees of puniſhment affords us a third. I have often obſerved with aſtoniſhment the little uſe, that chriſtians in general make of this article, ſince the doctrine itſelf is taught in ſcripture in the cleareſt manner. When we ſpeak of future puniſhment, we call it all Hell indifferently, and without diſtinction. We conceive of all the wicked as precipitated into the ſame gulf, loaded with the ſame chains, devoured by the ſame worm. We do not ſeem to think, there will be as much difference in their ſtate as there had been in their natural capacities, their exterior means of obtaining knowledge, and their various aids to aſſiſt them in their purſuit of it. We do not recollect, that, as perhaps there may not be two men in the world, who have alike partaken the gifts of heaven, ſo probably there will not be two wicked ſpirits in hell enduring an equal degree of puniſhment. There is an extreme difference between a Heathen and a Jew; there is an extreme diſtance between a Jew and a Chriſtian; and a greater ſtill between a Chriſtian and a Heathen. The goſpel-rule is, *Unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required.* Luke xii. 48. There muſt, therefore, be as great a difference in the other life between the puniſhment of a Jew and that of a Pagan, between that of a Pagan and that of a Jew, between that of a Pagan and that of a Chriſtian, as there is between the ſtates, in which God hath placed them on earth. Moreover, there is a very great

SERM. XIII. difference between one Jew and another, between Pagan and Pagan, Chriſtian and Chriſtian. Each hath in his own œconomy more or leſs talents. There muſt therefore be a like difference between the puniſhment of one Chriſtian and that of another, the puniſhment of one Jew and that of another Jew, the ſuffering of one Pagan and that of another: and conſequently, when we ſay, a Pagan wiſe, according to his own œconomy, and a Chriſtian, fooliſh according to his, are both in hell, we ſpeak in a very vague and equivocal manner.

To how many difficulties have men ſubmitted by not attending to this doctrine of degrees of puniſhment! Of what uſe, for example, might it have been to anſwer objections raiſed on the deſtiny of Pagans! As eternal puniſhment has been conſidered under images, that excite all the moſt excruciating pains, it could not be imagined how God ſhould condemn the wiſe heathens to a ſtate, that ſeemed ſuited only to monſters, who disfigure nature, and ſubvert ſociety. Some, therefore, to get rid of this difficulty, have widened the gate of heaven, and allowed other ways of arriving there beſide that, *whereby we muſt be ſaved*; Cato, Socrates, and Ariſtides have been mixed with the *multitude redeemed to God out of every people and nation*. Had the doctrine of diverſity of puniſhments been properly attended to, the condemnation of the heathens would not have appeared inconſiſtent with the perfections of God, provided it had been conſidered only as a puniſhment proportional to what was defective in their ſtate, and criminal in their life. For no one has a right to tax God with injuſtice for puniſhing Pagans, unleſs he could prove, that the degree of their pain exceeded that of their ſin; and as no one is able to make this combination, becauſe ſcripture poſitively aſſures us, God will obſerve this proportion, ſo none can murmur againſt his conduct without being guilty of blaſphemy.

Acts iv. 12.

Rev. v. 9.

But,

But, above all, the doctrine of degrees of puniſhment elucidates that of the eternity of them. Take this principle, which ſcripture eſtabliſheth in the cleareſt manner; preſs home all its conſequences; extend it as far as it can be carried; give ſcope even to your imagination, till the puniſhments which ſuch and ſuch perſons ſuffer in hell are reduced to a degree, that may ſerve to ſolve the difficulty of the doctrine of their eternity; whatever ſyſtem ye adopt on this article, I will even venture to ſay, whatever difficulty ye may meet with in following it, it will be always more reaſonable, I think, to make of one doctrine clearly revealed a clue to guide through the difficulties of another doctrine clearly revealed too, than raſhly to deny the formal deciſions of ſcripture. I mean to ſay, it would be more rational to ſtretch the doctrine of degrees too far, if I may venture to ſpeak ſo, than to deny that of their eternity. SERM. XIII.

4. The fourth ſource of ſolutions is a maxim, from which a divine ought never to depart; and which we wiſh particularly to inculcate among thoſe, who extend the operations of reaſon too far in matters of religion. Our maxim is this. We know, indeed, in general, what are the attributes of God: but we are extremely ignorant of their ſphere, we cannot determine how far they extend. We know, in general, God is free, he is juſt, he is merciful. But we are too ignorant to determine how far theſe perfections muſt go; becauſe the infinity of them abſorbs the capacity of our minds. An example may render our meaning plain. Suppoſe two philoſophers ſubſiſting before the creation of this world, and converſing together on the plan of the world, which God was about to create. Suppoſe the firſt of theſe philoſophers affirming—God is going to create intelligent creatures—he could communicate ſuch a degree of knowledge to them as would neceſſarily conduct them to ſupreme happineſs—but he intends to give them a reaſon, which may be abuſed, and

SERM. XIII. and may conduct them from ignorance to vice, and from vice to misery.—Moreover, God is going to create a world, in which virtue will be almost always in irons, and vice on a throne—tyrants will be crowned, and pious people confounded. Suppose the first of our philosophers to maintain these theses, how think ye? Would not the second have reasoned against this plan? Would he not, in all appearance, have had a right to affirm—It is impossible, God, being full of goodness, should create men, whose existence would be fatal to their happiness—It is impossible, a being supremely holy, should suffer sin to enter the world? Yet, how plausible soever, the reasons of this philosopher might then have appeared, the event hath since justified the truth of the first plan. It is certain, God hath created the world on the plan of the first; and it is also as certain, that this world hath nothing incompatible with the perfections of God, how difficult soever we may find it to answer objections. It is our diminutiveness, the narrowness of our minds, and the immensity of the deity, which prevent our knowing how far his attributes can go.

Apply this to our subject. The idea of hell seems to you repugnant to the attributes of God, you cannot comprehend how a just God can punish finite sins with infinite pain; how a merciful God can abandon his creature to eternal miseries. Your difficulties have some probability, I grant. Your reasons, I allow, seem well grounded. But dost thou remember, the attributes of God are infinite? Remember, thy knowledge is finite. Remember the two philosophers disputing on the plan of the world. Remember, the event hath condemned the difficulties of the last, and justified the plan of the first. Now, the revelation of future punishments in our system is equal to event in that of the first philosopher. They are revealed. You think future punishment inconsistent with the attributes

attributes of God: but your notion of inconſiſtence ought to vaniſh at the appearance of ſcripture-light. SERM. XIII.

Thus we have indicated a few proofs of the doctrine of eternal puniſhments. We have endeavoured to convince you, that what the ſcriptures teach us on the duration of the puniſhments of the wicked is neither repugnant to the nature of God, nor to the nature of man. We will now lay aſide theſe ideas, and will endeavour to improve the few moments, that remain, by addreſſing your conſciences. Having ſhewn you the doctrine of eternal puniſhments as taught in ſcripture, and approved by reaſon, we will try to ſhew it you as an object terrible and affecting. But, while we are endeavouring as much as poſſible, to accommodate ourſelves to your impatience, uſe ſome efforts with yourſelves; and, if ever, if ever through indulgence for our perſon, or through reſpect to our word, ye have opened acceſs to your hearts, grant it, I intreat you, to what I am going to propoſe.

III. Obſerve the quality, and the duration of the puniſhments of hell. The quality is expreſſed in theſe words, *ſmoke*, *torment*. The duration in theſe, *aſcend up for ever and ever*.

1. The *quality* of the puniſhments of hell is expreſſed in theſe terms, *ſmoke*, *torment*. Theſe metaphorical terms include five ideas. Privation of heavenly happineſs—ſenſation of pain—remorſe of conſcience.—horror of ſociety—increaſe of crime.

1. *A privation of celeſtial happineſs* is the firſt idea of hell, an idea, which we are incapable of forming fully in this life. We have eyes of fleſh and blood. We judge of happineſs and miſery according to this fleſh and blood, and as things relate to our families, our fortunes, our profeſſions, and we ſeldom think we have immortal ſouls. In the great day of retribution all theſe veils will be taken away. Darkneſs will be diſſipated, ſcales will fall from our eyes, the chief good will be known: but what will be the condition of

SERM. XIII. of him, who no ſooner diſcovers the chief good than he diſcovers alſo, that he ſhall be for ever deprived of it! Repreſent to yourſelves a man conſtrained to ſee, and made by his own experience to know, that the pleaſures, the grandeurs, and all the riches of this world are nothing but wind and ſmoke; and that true felicity conſiſts in communion with God, in beholding his perfections, and participating his glory: or, to uſe emblems taken from ſcripture, repreſent to yourſelves a man, who ſhall ſee the nuptial chamber of the bridegroom, his triumphant pomp and his magnificent palace; and who ſhall ſee all theſe glorious objects as felicities, which his crimes forbid him to enjoy. What regrets! What deſpair! Lord of nature! Being of beings! Adorable aſſemblage of all perfections! Eternal Father! Well-beloved Son! Holy ſpirit! glorious body of my divine redeemer! archangels! cherubims! ſeraphims! powers! dominions! general aſſembly of the firſt-born! myriads of angels! apoſtles! martyrs! ſaints of all ages, and of all nations! unfading crown! perfect knowledge! communion of a ſoul with its God! throne of glory! fulneſs of joy! rivers of pleaſure! all which I ſee, all which I know, and wiſh to enjoy, even while avenging juſtice ſeparates me from you; am I, then, for ever excluded from all your ineffable delights? Are ye all ſhewn to me to make me more ſenſible of my miſery? And do ye diſplay ſo much felicity only to render my pain more acute, and my deſtruction more terrible?

2. Conſider *painful ſenſations.* To theſe belong all the expreſſions of ſcripture juſt now mentioned, *darkneſs, blackneſs of darkneſs, thirſt, fire, lake burning with fire and brimſtone,* and all theſe to ſuch a degree that the damned would eſteem as an invaluable benefit one drop of water *to cool their tongues.* We dare not pretend to determine, that hell conſiſts of material fire. But if ye join to what we have now obſerved, the

Luke xvi. 24.

power

power of God to excite in our ſouls ſuch ſenſations as he pleaſes, if to this reflection ye add this remark, that ſcripture almoſt always employs the idea of fire to expreſs the pains of hell, ye will be inclined to believe, that moſt of theſe unhappy ſufferers literally endure torments like thoſe, which men burning in flames feel; whether God act immediately on their ſouls, or unite them to particles of material fire. The very name given in ſcripture to the fire of hell hath ſomething very ſignificant in it. It is called *the fire of Gehenna.* This word is compounded of words, which ſignify *the valley of Hinnon.* This valley was rendered famous by the abominable ſacrifices, which the idolatrous Jews offered to Moloch. They ſet up a hollow brazen figure, encloſed their children in it, kindled fires underneath, and in this horrible manner conſumed the miſerable infant victims of their cruel ſuperſtition. This is an image of hell. Terrible image! We have no need of abſtract and metaphyſical ideas. Who among us could patiently bear his hand one hour in fire? Who would not tremble to be condemned to paſs one day in this monſtrous machine? And who, who could bear to be eternally confined in it? When we ſee a criminal in chains, given up to an executioner of human juſtice, and juſt going to be burnt to death, nature ſhudders at the ſight, the fleſh of ſpectators ſhivers, and the cries of the ſufferer rend their hearts, and excite in painful compaſſion all the emotions of the ſoul. What muſt it be to be delivered up to an executioner of divine juſtice? What to be caſt into the fire of hell? Delicate fleſh! feeble organs of a human body! What will ye do, when ye are caſt into the quick and devouring flames of hell!

SERM. XIII.

Mat. v. 22.

3. The third idea of future puniſhment is that of the *remorſe* of conſcience. The pains of the mind are as lively and ſenſible as thoſe of the body. The grief of one man, who loſes a perſon dear to him, the inquietude of another afraid of apparitions and ſpec-

SERM. XIII. tres, the gloomy terrors of a third in ſolitude, the emotions of a criminal receiving his ſentence of death, and, above all, the agitations of a conſcience filled with a ſenſe of guilt, are pains as lively and ſenſible as thoſe, which are excited by the moſt cruel torments. What great effects has remorſe produced! It has made
Dan. v. 6. tyrants tremble. It has ſmitten the knees of a Belſhazzar together in the midſt of his courtiers. It has rendered the voluptuous inſenſible to pleaſure, and it has put many a hardened wretch upon the rack. It has done more. It has forced ſome, who upon ſcaffolds and wheels have denied their crimes, after a releaſe to confeſs them, to find out a judge, to give evidence againſt themſelves, and to implore the mercy of a violent death more tolerable than the agonies of their guilty ſouls. This will be the ſtate of the damned. This will be *the worm, that never dies*, and which will conſume their ſouls. This will be the cruel vulture, that will devour their vitals. Conſcience will be obliged to do homage to an avenging God. It will be forced to acknowledge, that the motives of the Goſpel were highly proper to affect every man, who had not made his *face as an adamant, his forehead harder than a flint*. It will be forced to acknowledge, that the goodneſs of God had been enough to penetrate every heart, even thoſe, which were leaſt capable of gratitude. It will be conſtrained to own, that the ſuccours of the ſpirit of God had been more than ſufficient of themſelves. It will be driven to own, that the deſtruction of man came of himſelf, and that he ſacrificed his ſalvation to vain imaginations, more deluſive than vanity itſelf. The teſtimony of a good conſcience hath ſupported martyrs in fire and tortures. When a martyr ſaid to himſelf, I ſuffer for truth, I plead a good cauſe, I bear my Saviour's croſs, I am a martyr for God himſelf; he was happy in ſpite of ſeeming horrors. But when the reproaches of conſcience are added to terrible torments, when the ſufferer is obliged to ſay

to

to himſelf, I am the author of my own puniſhment, I ſuffer for my own ſins, I am a victim of vice, a victim for the devil; nothing can equal his horror and deſpair. SERM. XIII.

4. A fourth idea is taken from the horror of the *ſociety* in hell. How great ſoever the miſery of a man on earth may be, he bears it with patience, when wiſe diſcourſe is addreſſed to him for his conſolation, when a friend opens his boſom to him, when a father ſhares his ſufferings, and a charitable hand endeavours to wipe away his tears. The converſation of a grave and ſympathizing friend diminiſhes his troubles, ſoftens his pains, and charms him under his afflictions, till he becomes eaſy and happy in them. But, good God! what ſociety is that in hell! Imagine yourſelves condemned to paſs all your days with thoſe odious men, who ſeem formed only to trouble the world. Imagine yourſelves ſhut up in a cloſe priſon with a band of reprobates. Imagine yourſelves lying on a death-bed, and having no other comforters than traitors and aſſaſſins. This is an image of hell! Good God! what a ſociety! tyrants, aſſaſſins, blaſphemers, Satan with his angels, the prince of the air with all his infamous legions!

From all theſe ideas reſults a fifth, an *increaſe of ſin*. Self-love is the governing paſſion of mankind. It is that, which puts all the reſt in motion, and all the reſt either ſpring from it, or are ſupported by it. It is not in the power of man to love a being, who hath no relation to his happineſs; and it is not poſſible for him to avoid hating one, who employs his power to make him miſerable. As God will aggravate the ſufferings of the damned by diſplaying his attributes, their hatred of him will be unbounded, their torment will excite their hatred, their hatred will aggravate their torment. Is not this the height of miſery? To hate by neceſſity of nature the Perfect Being, the Supreme Being, the Sovereign Beauty, in a word, to hate God;

SERM. XIII. doth not this idea preſent to your minds a ſtate the moſt melancholy, the moſt miſerable? One chief excellence of the glory of happy ſpirits is a conſummate love to their creator. One of the moſt horrible puniſhments of hell is the excluſion of divine love. O miſerable ſtate of the damned! In it they utter as many blaſphemies againſt God as the happy ſouls in heaven ſhout halleluiahs to his praiſe.

These are the puniſhments of condemned ſouls. It remains only that we conſider the length and duration of them. But by what means, my brethren, ſhall we deſcribe theſe profound articles of contemplation? Can we number the innumerable, and meaſure that, which is beyond all menſuration? Can we make you comprehend the incomprehenſible? And ſhall we amuſe you with our imaginations?

For my part, when I endeavour to repreſent eternity to myſelf, I avail myſelf of whatever I can conceive moſt long and durable. I heap imagination on imagination, conjecture on conjecture. Firſt, I conſider thoſe long lives, which all men wiſh, and ſome attain; I obſerve thoſe old men, who live four or five generations, and who alone make the hiſtory of an age. I do more, I turn to ancient chronicles. I go back to the patriarchal age, and conſider a life extending through a thouſand years; and I ſay to myſelf, All this is not eternity; all this is only a point in compariſon of eternity.

Having repreſented to myſelf real objects, I form ideas of imaginary ones. I go from our age to the time of publiſhing the goſpel, from thence to the publication of the law, from the law to the flood, from the flood to the creation. I join this epoch to the preſent time, and I imagine Adam yet living. Had Adam lived till now, and had he lived in miſery, had he paſſed all his time in a fire, or on a rack, what idea muſt we form of his condition? At what price would we agree to expoſe ourſelves to miſery ſo great? What imperial

imperial glory would appear glorious, were it followed by ſo much woe? Yet this is not eternity; all this is nothing in compariſon of eternity. SERM. XIII.

I go farther ſtill. I proceed from imagination to imagination, from one ſuppoſition to another. I take the greateſt number of years, that can be imagined. I add ages to ages, millions of ages to millions of ages. I form of all theſe one fixed number, and I ſtay my imagination. After this, I ſuppoſe God to create a world like this, which we inhabit. I ſuppoſe him creating it by forming one atom after another, and employing in the production of each atom the time fixed in my calculation juſt now mentioned. What numberleſs ages would the creation of ſuch a world in ſuch a manner require! Then I ſuppoſe the Creator to arrange theſe atoms, and to purſue the ſame plan of arranging them as of creating them. What numberleſs ages would ſuch an arrangement require! Finally, I ſuppoſe him to diſſolve and annihilate the whole, and obſerving the ſame method in this diſſolution as he obſerved in the creation and diſpoſition of the whole. What an immenſe duration would be conſumed! Yet this is not eternity; all this is only a point in compariſon of eternity.

Aſſociate now all theſe ſuppoſitions, my brethren, and of all theſe periods make one fixed period; multiply it again, and ſuppoſe yourſelves to paſs in multiplying it a time equal to that, which the period contains; it is literally and ſtrictly true, all this is not eternity; all this is only a point in compariſon of eternity.

My God! one night paſſed in a burning fever, or in ſtruggling in the waves of the ſea between life and death, appears of an immenſe length! It ſeems to the ſufferer as if the ſun had forgot its courſe, and as if all the laws of nature itſelf were ſubverted. What then will be the ſtate of thoſe miſerable victims to divine diſpleaſure, who, after they ſhall have paſſed through the

SERM. XIII. the ages, which we have been deſcribing, will be obliged to make this overwhelming reflection; All this is only an atom of our miſery! What will their deſpair be, when they ſhall be forced to ſay to themſelves; Again we muſt revolve through theſe enormous periods; again we muſt ſuffer a privation of celeſtial happineſs; devouring flames again; cruel remorſe again; crimes and blaſphemies over and over again! *For ever! For ever!* Ah my brethren! my brethren! how ſevere is this word even in this life! How great is a misfortune, when it is incapable of relief! How inſupportable, when we are obliged to add for ever to it! Theſe irons for ever! theſe chains for ever! this priſon for ever! this univerſal contempt for ever! this domeſtic trouble for ever! Poor mortals! how ſhort ſighted are ye to call ſorrows eternal, which end with your lives! What! this life! this life, that paſſeth with the rapidity of a *weaver's ſhuttle!* this life, which vaniſheth *like a ſleep!* is this what ye call for ever! Ah! abſorbing periods of eternity, accumulated myriads of ages; theſe, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, theſe will be the FOR EVER of the damned!

Job vii. 6.
Pſal. xc. 5.

I ſink under the weight of this ſubject; and I declare, when I ſee my friends, my relations, the people of my charge, this whole congregation; when I think, that I, that you, that we are all threatened with theſe torments; when I ſee in the lukewarmneſs of my devotions, in the languor of my love, in the levity of my reſolutions and deſigns, the leaſt evidence, though it be only probable, or preſumptive, of my future miſery, yet I find in the thought a mortal poiſon, which diffuſeth itſelf into every period of my life, rendering ſociety tireſome, nouriſhment inſipid, pleaſure diſguſtful, and life itſelf a cruel bitter. I ceaſe to wonder, that a fear of hell hath made ſome melancholy, and others mad; that it hath inclined ſome to expoſe themſelves to a living martyrdom by fleeing from all commerce with the reſt of mankind, and others

to

to ſuffer the moſt violent and terrible torments. But the more terror this idea inſpires, the more inexcuſable are we, if it produce no good fruits in us. The idea of eternity ought to ſubvert all our ſinful projects. In order to avoid eternal miſery, all ſhould be ſuffered, all ſurmounted, all undertaken, ſinful ſelf ſhould be crucified, and the whole man devoted in holy ſacrifice to God. Let each particle of our bodies become a victim to penitence, let each moment of life expoſe us to a new martyrdom; ſtill we ſhould be happy, could we avoid the flaming ſword, that hangs over our heads, and eſcape the gulfs of miſery, which yawn beneath our feet. SERM. XIII.

My brethren, have ye heard what I have been ſpeaking? have ye well reflected on what I ſaid? Perhaps I may have weakened theſe great truths. Perhaps I may have left many proper things unſaid. Yet, methinks, if ye have thoroughly comprehended what little I have ſaid, ye will become new men.

Remember we have not exceeded the truth; all, that we have ſaid, is taken from ſcripture, from thoſe ſcriptures, which ye profeſs to believe, ſo that if ye deny theſe truths, ye muſt deny your own faith, chriſtianity, religion.

Remember, we have taken our evidences from that part of ſcripture, which ye conſider as the moſt kind and comfortable, I mean the goſpel. Renounce, I beſeech you, at once this miſerable prejudice, that under the goſpel we ought not to ſpeak of hell. On the contrary, it is the goſpel, that reveals it in its cleareſt light; it is the goſpel, which proves it; it is the goſpel, that deſcribes it; the goſpel ſays, *Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire.* It is the goſpel, that ſays, *The ſervant, which knew his Lord's will, and did it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* It is the goſpel, that ſays, *If we ſin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice* Mat. xxv 41. Luke xii. 47. Heb. x. 26, 27.

for

SERM. XIII. *for ſins: but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries.*

Remember, the doctrine of degrees of puniſhment, which ſeems to diminiſh the horrors of hell in regard to Pagans, and Chriſtians educated in ſuperſtition and ignorance, has every thing in it to augment the horror of future pain in regard to ſuch Chriſtians as moſt of us are.

Recollect what ſort of perſons God reſerves for this ſtate. Not only aſſaſſins, murderers, highway-robbers: but alſo apoſtates, who know the truth, but who ſacrifice through worldly intereſts the profeſſion of truth to idolatry; miſers, uſurers, unjuſt perſons, gluttons; unclean, implacable, lifeleſs, lukewarm, profeſſors of chriſtianity; all theſe are included in the guilt and puniſhment of ſin.

Remember, we muſt be wilfully blind, if we deny, that in this town, in this church, in this flock, in this aſſembly, among you my hearers, who liſten to me, and look at me, there are ſuch perſons as I juſt now mentioned, each of whom muſt come to this reflection; I myſelf, I perhaps, am in a ſtate of damnation, perhaps my name is one in the fatal liſt of thoſe, at whom theſe threatnings point.

Go farther yet. Remember, this life is the only time given you to prevent theſe terrible puniſhments. After this life, no more exhortations, no more ſermons, no more admiſſion of ſighs and tears, no more place for repentance.

After this, think on the brevity of life. Think, there may be perhaps only one year granted, perhaps only one month, perhaps only one day, perhaps only one hour, perhaps only one moment to avoid this miſery; ſo that perhaps (O Lord avert the dreadful ſuppoſition!) perhaps ſome one of us may this very day experience all theſe torments and pains.

Finally, conſider the ſpirit, that this moment animates us, the drift of this diſcourſe, and, to ſay more,

conſider

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conſider what God is now doing in your favour. In a plenitude of compaſſion, and with bowels of the tendereſt love, he intreats and exhorts you to eſcape theſe terrible miſeries; he conjures you not to deſtroy yourſelves; he ſaith to you, *O that my people would hearken unto me! Be inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee! Why, why will ye die? O houſe of Iſrael!* O! were we wiſe, theſe expoſtulations would reign over our hearts! O! if there remained the leaſt ſpark of reaſon in us, the frightful image of hell would henceforth make the deepeſt impreſſions on our ſouls!

Pſal. lxxxi. 8. Jer. vi. 8.

Frightful ideas of judgment and hell! may ye be always in my mind, when the world would decoy me to ſtain my miniſtry by its vain and glaring ſnares! Frightful ideas of judgment and hell! may ye ſtrike all theſe hearers ſo as to give ſucceſs to this ſermon, and weight to our miniſtry! Frightful ideas of judgment and hell! may ye ever follow us, ſo that by knowing the terror of avenging juſtice, and the unſpeakable value of grace ſet before us, we may be rendered capable of participating eternal glory; which I wiſh you, my brethren, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

The UNIFORMITY of GOD in his GOVERNMENT.

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The UNIFORMITY of GOD in his GOVERNMENT.

HEBREWS xiii. 8.

Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever.

S. Paul gives us a very beautiful idea of God, when he ſays, *The wiſdom of God is manifold.* Eph. iii. 10. The firſt great cauſe, the ſupreme Being, hath deſigns infinitely diverſified. This appears by the various beings, which he hath created, and by the different ways, in which he governs them.

What a variety in created beings! A material world, and an intelligent world! Matter variouſly modified, or, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, *One kind of fleſh of men, another fleſh of beaſts, another of fiſhes, another of birds, celeſtial bodies, and bodies terreſtrial, one glory of the ſun, another glory of the moon,* and ſo on to an infinite multitude. There is a ſimilar variety of ſpirit; men, angels, ſeraphims, cherubims, powers, dominions, archangels, and thrones.

What a variety in the manner, in which God governs theſe beings! To reſtrain ourſelves to men only, are not ſome loaded with benefits, and others depreſſed with adverſities? Doth he not enlighten ſome by nature, others by the law, and others by the goſpel? Did he not allow the antediluvians one period of life, the cities of the plain another, and us another; the

firſt

SERM. XIV. first he overwhelmed with water, the next conſumed by fire, and the laſt by an endleſs variety of means.

But, although there be a diverſity in the conduct of God, it is always a diverſity of wiſdom. Whether he creates a material or an intelligent world; whether he forms celeſtial or terreſtrial bodies, men, angels, ſeraphims, or cherubims; whether he governs the univerſe by the ſame, or by different laws; in all caſes, and at all times, he acts like a God, he hath only one principle, and that is order. There is a harmony in his perfections, which he never diſconcerts. There is in his conduct an uniformity, which is the great character of his actions. His variety is always wiſe, or, to repeat the words juſt now mentioned, *the wiſdom of God is of many kinds.*

Theſe great truths we intend to ſet before you to-day; for on theſe the apoſtle intended to treat in his epiſtle to the Hebrews. Look, ſaid he, on the preſent period, reflect on paſt times, anticipate the future, run through all dimenſions of time, dive into the abyſſes of eternity, ye will always find the perfections of God in exact harmony, ye will perceive an exact uniformity characteriſe his actions, ye will acknowledge, that Jeſus Chriſt is *the true God, and eternal life, the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever.*

1 John v. 20.

Are ye diſpoſed, my brethren, to elevate your minds a little while above ſenſe and matter? Can ye ſufficiently ſuſpend the impreſſions, which ſenſible objects made on your minds laſt week, to give ſuch an attention to this ſubject as its nature and importance demand? Let us, then, enter into the matter, and God grant, while we are contemplating to-day the harmony of his perfections, and the uniformity of his government, we may be *changed into his image from glory to glory, even as by his ſpirit.* God grant, as far as it is compatible with the inconſtancy eſſential to human nature, we may be always the ſame, and amidſt the

the perpetual viciſſitudes of life, may have only one principle, that is to obey and pleaſe him! Amen. SERM. XIV.

I ſhall connect, as well as I can, the different explications of my text; I would rather conciliate them in this manner, than conſume my hour in relating, and comparing them, and in ſelecting the moſt probable from them.

Theſe expoſitions may be reduced to three claſſes. Some ſay, the apoſtle ſpeaks of the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt; others of his doctrine; and a third claſs apply the paſſage to the protection, that he affords his church.

The firſt claſs of expoſitors, who apply the text to the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, are not unanimous in the ſtrict ſenſe of the words; ſome think, the apoſtle ſpeaks of the human nature of Jeſus Chriſt, and others ſay, he ſpeaks of his divine nature. The latter take the text for a proof of his eternity; and, according to them, the words are ſynonimous to theſe, *I am alpha and omega, the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* Rev. i. 8.

The former conſider the apoſtle as ſpeaking of Chriſt, either as man, or as mediator; and, according to them, S. Paul means to ſay, The Saviour, whom I propoſe to you, was the Saviour of Adam, of Abraham, and of the whole church, agreeably to what I have elſewhere affirmed, *Him hath God ſet forth a propitiation through faith for the remiſſion of ſins, that are paſt*, that is, his ſacrifice always was the only relief of ſinners. Rom. iii. 25.

The ſecond claſs of interpreters affirm, that S. Paul doth not ſpeak of the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt: but of his doctrine. In this view the text muſt be connected with the words, which immediately follow, *be not carried about with divers and ſtrange doctrines.* Why would not the apoſtle have chriſtians carried about with divers doctrines? Becauſe Jeſus Chriſt, that is Chriſtianity, the religion taught by Jeſus Chriſt, is always

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always the ſame, and is not ſubject to the uncertainty of any human ſcience.

But other expoſitors aſcribe a quite different ſenſe to the words, and ſay, the apoſtle ſpeaks neither of the perſon of Chriſt; nor of his doctrine; but of that protection, which he affords believers. According to this, the text has no connection with the following verſe: but with that, which goes before. S. Paul had been propoſing to the believing Hebrews the examples of their anceſtors and predeceſſors, ſome of whom had ſealed the doctrine of the goſpel with their blood. *Remember* your guides, *who have ſpoken unto you the word of God; whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation.* In order to induce them to imitate theſe bright examples, he adds, *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever*; that is to ſay, He ſupported, and rewarded his primitive martyrs, and he will confirm and crown all, who ſhall have courage to follow their example.

It would be eaſy to multiply this liſt of various opinions: but, as I ſaid, I will connect the three different expoſitions, which have been mentioned, and endeavour to ſhew you the admirable harmony of the perfections of God, and the uniformity of his actions in regard to mankind, firſt as they appear in the œconomy of time, and ſecondly in that of eternity; and we will attempt to prove, that God is the ſame in both.

I. We ſee in the œconomy of *time* four remarkable varieties. 1. A variety in the degrees of knowledge given to the church. 2. A variety in the worſhip required of it. 3. A variety in the nature of the evidences, on which it hath pleaſed God to found the faith of the church. 4. A variety in the laws, that he hath thought proper to preſcribe. At one time he gave only a ſmall degree of knowledge; at another he drew aſide the veil, and expoſed to public view the whole body of truth and knowledge. At one time he

he preſcribed the obſervation of a great many groſs ceremonies along with that ſpiritual worſhip, which he required of men; at another time he required a worſhip altogether ſpiritual and free from ceremonial uſages. At one time his laws tolerated ſome remains of concupiſcence; at another time he commanded the eradication of every fibre of ſin. At one time the church ſaw ſenſible miracles, and grounded faith on them; at another time faith followed a train of reaſoning, made up of principles and conſequences. At one time the church participated worldly pomps and grandeurs; at another it experienced all the miſery and ignominy of the world. SERM. XIV.

A work ſo different, and, in ſome ſort, ſo oppoſite in its parts, is, however, the work of one and the ſame God. And, what is more remarkable, a work, the parts of which are ſo different, and ſo oppoſite, ariſeth from one principle, that is, from the union and harmony of the divine perfections. The ſame principle, that inclined God to grant the church a ſmall degree of light at one time, engaged him to grant a greater degree at another time. The ſame principle, which induced him to require a groſs worſhip under the œconomy of the law, inclined him to exact a worſhip wholly ſpiritual under the goſpel; and ſo of the reſt.

1. We ſee in God's government of his church various degrees of *light* communicated. Compare the time of Moſes with that of the prophets, and that of the prophets with that of the evangeliſts and apoſtles, and the difference will be evident. Moſes did not enter into a particular detail concerning God, the world in general, or man in particular. It ſhould ſeem, the principal view of this legiſlator, in regard to God, was to eſtabliſh the doctrine of his unity; at moſt to give a vague idea of his perfections. It ſhould ſeem, his chief deſign, in regard to the world in general, was to prove that it was the production of that God,

SERM. XIV. whoſe unity he eſtabliſhed. And, in regard to man in particular, it ſhould ſeem, his principal drift was to teach that, being a part of a world, that had a beginning, he hiſſelf had a beginning, that he derived his exiſtence from the ſame creator, and from him only could expect to enjoy a happy exiſtence.

Paſs from the reading of the writings of Moſes to a ſurvey of the prophecies, thence proceed to the goſpels, and the epiſtles, and ye will ſee truth unfold as the ſacred roll opens. Ye will be fully convinced, that as John the Baptiſt had more knowledge than any of his predeceſſors, ſo he hiſſelf had leſs than any of his followers.

In theſe various degrees of knowledge, communicated by God to men, I ſee that uniformity, which is the diſtinguiſhing character of his actions, and the inviolable rule of his government. The ſame principle, that inclined him to grant a little light to the age of Moſes, inclined him to afford more to the time of the prophets, and the greateſt of all to the age, in which the evangeliſts and apoſtles lived. What is this principle? It is a principle of order, which requires, that the object propoſed to a faculty be proportioned to this faculty; that a truth propoſed to an intelligence be proportioned to this intelligence.

What proportion would there have been between the truths propoſed to the Iſraelites, when they came out of Egypt, and the ſtate, in which they then were, had God revealed all the doctrines to them, which he hath ſince revealed to us? Could a people born in ſlavery, employed in the meaneſt works, without education, meditation, and reading, attain a juſt notion of thoſe ſublime ideas, which the prophets have given us of the Deity? How could God have enabled them to conceive rightly of theſe truths unleſs he had more than aſſiſted them, unleſs he had new made them? And how could he have re-created them, if I may ſpeak ſo, as far as was neceſſary to fit them for under-

underſtanding theſe truths, without annihilating their faculties, and without violating that law of order, which requires every one to make uſe of his own faculties? What proportion would there have been between the ſtate of the Iſraelites and their abilities, had God revealed to them ſome doctrines taught us in the goſpel? Theſe would have been, through the ſtupidity of the people, uſeleſs, and even dangerous to them. Thus we may juſtly ſuppoſe of ſome prophecies concerning the Meſſiah; had they repreſented him in ſuch a manner as the event has ſhewn him to us, the repreſentation, far from attaching them to the worſhip of God, would have tempted them to conform to that of ſome other nations, which was more agreeable to their concupiſcence. Particularly, of the doctrine of the Trinity, which makes ſo conſiderable a part of the chriſtian ſyſtem, we may juſtly ſuppoſe what I have ſaid. A people, who had lived among idolaters, a people, who had been accuſtomed not only to multiply gods, but alſo to deify the meaneſt creatures, could ſuch a people have been told without danger, that in the divine eſſence there was a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit? Would not this doctrine have been a ſnare too powerful for their reaſon? If they ſo often fell into polytheiſm, that is, into the notion of a plurality of gods, in ſpite of all the precautions, that Moſes uſed to preſerve them from it, what, pray, would have been the caſe, had their religion itſelf ſeemed to favour it?

If we follow this reaſoning, we ſhall ſee, that when the church was in a ſtate of infancy, God proportioned his revelation to an infant ſtate, as he proportioned it to a mature age, when the church had arrived at maturity. This is an idea of S. Paul, *When I was a child, I thought as a child*; I thought, the perfections of the great God had ſome likeneſs to the imperfections of men, at leaſt, I was not ſufficiently ſtruck with the immenſe diſtance between human imperfec-

1 Cor. xiii. 11.

SERM. XIV. tions and divine excellence; I repreſented God to myſelf as a being agitated with human paſſions, and capable of wrath, jealouſy, and repentance: *But when I became a man, I put away childiſh things*, God made me underſtand, that he deſcribed himſelf to me under theſe emblems for the ſake of proportioning himſelf to my capacity, condeſcending, as it were, to liſp with me in order to learn me to ſpeak plainly. *When I was a child, I thought as a child*; I thought, it was a matter of great conſequence to man to have fruitful fields, heavy harveſts, and victorious armies; I thought a long life, protracted through ſeveral ages, the greateſt felicity, that a mortal could enjoy: *But when I became a man, I put away childiſh things*; God then revealed to me his deſign in propoſing motives to me adapted to my weakneſs; it was to attract me to himſelf by theſe incitements; then I underſtood, that the longeſt life, how happy and ſplendid ſoever it might be, fell infinitely ſhort of ſatisfying the wants and deſires of a ſoul, conſcious of its own dignity, and anſwering to the excellence of its origin; I was convinced, that a ſoul aſpiring to eternal felicity, and filled with the noble ambition of participating the happineſs of the immortal God, conſiders with equal indifference the higheſt and the meaneſt offices in ſociety, riches and poverty, the ſhort duration of twenty years and the little longer of an hundred. *When I was a child, I thought as a child*; I thought the Meſſiah, ſo often promiſed in the prophecies, ſo often repreſented in types, and expected with ſo much ardour by the church, would come to hold a ſuperb court, to march at the head of a numerous army, to erect a throne, to ſeat himſelf there, and to make the Romans, the conquerors of the whole earth, lick the duſt: *But when I became a man, I put away childiſh things*; God informed me, that a Meſſiah, ſent to make me happy, muſt come to reſtrain my avidity for the world, and not to gratify it, to check my paſſions, and not to irritate them;

them; he inſtructed me, that a Meſſiah, appointed to redeem mankind, muſt be faſtened to a croſs, and not ſeated on a throne; muſt ſubdue the devil, death, and ſin, and not the Romans, muſt be deſpiſed and rejected, and not encircled with a pompous court. SERM. XIV.

2. What juſtifies the government of God on one of theſe articles, on the various degrees of light beſtowed on his church, will fully juſtify him in regard to the *worſhip* required by him. Let Jeſus Chriſt, as far as the ſubject will allow, be oppoſed to Moſes; contraſt Moſes giving an hundred ceremonial precepts along with one precept of morality, with Jeſus Chriſt giving an hundred moral precepts with one ceremony. Compare Moſes, impoſing on the Iſraelites *heavy burdens grievous to be borne*, with Jeſus Chriſt, propoſing *an eaſy yoke and a light burden*. Oppoſe Moſes enjoining feſtivals, purifications, ſacrifices, and obſervances without number, to Jeſus Chriſt reducing all the ritual of his religion to baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, to a worſhip the leaſt encumbered and the moſt artleſs and ſimple, that ever a religion propoſed, declaring, *Now is the hour, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth*. Notwithſtanding this ſeeming difference, God acts on the uniform principle of order. Uniformity, if I may expreſs myſelf ſo, is in him the cauſe of variety, and the ſame principle that engaged him to preſcribe a groſs ſenſible worſhip to the Iſraelites, engageth him to preſcribe a worſhip of another kind to Chriſtians. Mat. xxiii. 4. xi. 30. John iv. 23.

Conceive of the Jews, as we have juſt now deſcribed them, enveloped in matter, loving to ſee the objects of their worſhip before their eyes, and, as they ſaid themſelves, to have *gods going before them*. Imagine theſe groſs creatures coming into our aſſemblies, how could they, being all ſenſe and imagination, (ſo to ſpeak,) exerciſe the better powers of their ſouls without objects operating on fancy and ſenſe? How could they have made reflection, meditation, and thought, ſupply the Exod. xxxii. 1.

place

SERM. XIV.

place of hands and eyes, they, who hardly knew what it was to meditate? How could they, who had hardly any idea of ſpirituality, have ſtudied the nature of God abſtractly, which yet is the only way of conducting us to a clear knowledge of a ſpiritual being?

If there ever were a religion proper to ſpiritualiſe men; if ever a religion were fitted to produce attention and emulation, and to fix our ideas on an inviſible God, certainly it is the chriſtian religion. And yet how few Chriſtians are capable of approaching God without the aid of ſenſible objects? Whence come rich altars, ſuperb edifices, magnificent decorations, ſtatues of ſilver and gold adorned with precious ſtones, pompous proceſſions, gaudy habits, and all that heap of ceremonies, with which one whole community employs the minds, or, ſhall I rather ſay, amuſes the ſenſes of its diſciples? All theſe argue a general diſinclination to piety without ceremony. Whence comes another kind of ſuperſtition, which, though leſs groſs in appearance, is more ſo in effect? How is it, that ſome of you perſuade yourſelves, that God, though he doth not require any longer the pompous worſhip of the Jews, will yet be perfectly ſatisfied with the obſervation of the chriſtian ritual, although it be always unaccompanied with the exerciſe of the mind, and the emotions of the heart? Whence comes this kind of ſuperſtition? It proceeds from the ſame diſpoſition, a diſinclination, and a difficulty to approach God without the aid of ſenſible things. And yet, all things conſidered, a pompous worſhip is more worthy of God than a plain worſhip. The Jew, who offers hecatombs to God, honours the deity more than the chriſtian, who offers only prayers to him. The Jew, who cleanſeth his hands, feet, and habits, when he goes to preſent himſelf before God, honours him much more than the chriſtian, who obſerves none of theſe ceremonies, when he approaches him. The Jew, who comes from the fartheſt part of the world to adore the Deity in a ſplendid temple, honours

nours God much more than the Chriſtian, who worſhips SERM. him in any mean edifice. But God retrenched pomp XIV. in the exterior of religion leſt the capacities of men's minds, too much taken up with pomp, ſhould not furniſh thoſe cool reflections of mind, and thoſe juſt ſentiments of heart, of which the Deity appears an object ſo proper to all, who know him as he is revealed in the goſpel. If Chriſtians then, who, through the nature of the revelation, with which God hath honoured them, know the Deity better than the Jews knew him, if they find a difficulty in rendering to God a worſhip of heart and mind proportional to this knowledge, what would have been the difficulties of the Jews, whoſe degrees of knowledge were ſo far inferior to ours? The ſame principle, then, that inclined the ſupreme being to exact of his church a groſs ceremonial worſhip under ancient diſpenſations, engageth him to require a worſhip altogether ſpiritual, and detached from ſenſible objects, under the diſpenſation of the goſpel.

3. The ſame may be ſaid of the *evidences*, on which God hath founded the faith of his church; and this is our third article. What a ſtriking difference! Formerly the church ſaw ſenſible miracles, level to the weakeſt capacities; at preſent our faith is founded on a chain of principles and conſequences, which find exerciſe for the moſt penetrating geniuſſes. How many times have infidels reproached us on account of this difference! How often have they inferred, that the church never ſaw miracles, becauſe there are none wrought now! How often have they pretended to prove, that, had miracles ever been wrought, they ought to be performed ſtill. But this triumph is imaginary, and only ſerves to diſplay the abſurdity of thoſe, who make parade of it.

A wiſe being, who propoſeth a truth to an intelligent creature, ought to proportion his proofs not only to the importance of the truth propoſed, and to the capacity of him, to whom evidence is offered: but alſo

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SERM. XIV. to his own end in propoſing it. If he intend only by propoſing a truth to make it underſtood, he will give all his arguments as much clearneſs and facility as they are capable of having: but if he deſign by propoſing a truth to exerciſe the faculties of him, to whom it was propoſed; if he intend to put his obedience to the trial, and to render him in ſome ſort worthy of the benefit, which he means to beſtow; then it will be neceſſary indeed to place the arguments, on which the truth is founded, in a ſtrong and concluſive point of view: but it will not be neceſſary to give them all the clearneſs and facility, of which they are capable.

Why then, ye will ſay, did not God give to the contemporaries of Jeſus Chriſt, and his apoſtles, ſuch an exerciſe of capacity as he gives to Chriſtians now? Why ſhould a truth, made ſo very intelligible then by a ſeal of miracles, be inacceſſible to us, except by the painful way of reaſoning and diſcuſſion? I deny the principle, on which this objection goes. I do not allow, that God exerciſed them, who lived in the time of Chriſt and his apoſtles, leſs than he exerciſeth us. Weigh their circumſtances againſt yours; repreſent Chriſtianity deſtitute of thoſe arguments, which ariſe in favour of it from the rejection of the Jews, and the converſion of the Gentiles; imagine men called to own for their God and redeemer a man, who had *no form, nor comelineſs*, a man dragged from one tribunal to another, from one province to another, and at laſt expiring on a croſs. How needful were miracles in theſe ſad times, and with all their aid how hard was it to believe! Repreſent to yourſelves the whole world let looſe againſt Chriſtians; imagine the primitive diſciples required to believe the heavenly origin of a religion, which called them firſt to be baptized in water, then in blood. How neceſſary were miracles in theſe adverſe times, and how hard, with all the encouragement given by them, muſt the practice of duty be then! Weigh theſe circumſtances againſt

Iſai. liii. 2.

againſt yours, and the balance will appear more equal, than ye have imagined. There is, ye will perceive, an uniformity in God's government of both, even when his government ſeems ſo very diſſimilar. SERM. XIV.

4. In like manner we obſerve, in the fourth place, a ſimilar uniformity in the various *laws* preſcribed to the church. One of the moſt famous queſtions, which the theological debates of the latter ages have produced, is that, which regards the difference between the morality of the Old and New Teſtament. Without pronouncing on the different manners, in which the queſtion hath been anſwered, I will content myſelf with propoſing what, I think, ought to be anſwered. The morality of both diſpenſations, it may truly be affirmed, in one ſenſe is abſolutely the ſame: but in another ſenſe it is not ſo. The great principles of morality, both among Jews and Chriſtians, are abſolutely the ſame. There not only is no difference: but there can be none. It would be incompatible with the perfections of the Creator to ſuppoſe, that, having formed an intelligent creature capable of knowing him, he ſhould diſpenſe with his obligation to this precept, the ground and ſource of all others, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind.* This was the morality of Adam and Abraham, Moſes and the prophets, Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles. Mat. xxii. 37.

But, if we conſider the conſequences, that reſult from this principle, and the particular precepts, which proceed from it, in theſe reſpects morality varies in different periods of the church. At all times, and in all places, God required his church to *love him with all the heart, and with all the ſoul, and with all the mind:* but he did not inform his people at all times and in all places the manner, in which he required love to expreſs itſelf. Expreſſions of love muſt be regulated by ideas of deity. Ideas of deity are more or leſs pure as God reveals himſelf more or leſs clearly. We have

SERM. XIV. seen what a difference there is between Chriſtians and Jews in this reſpect. We have even proved, that it was founded on the perfections of God, on thoſe laws of proportion, which he inviolably purſues. The laws of proportion, then, which God inviolably follows, and the eminence of his perfections alſo require, that, as he hath made himſelf known to Chriſtians more fully than he revealed himſelf to the Jews, ſo he ſhould require of the diſciples of Chriſt a morality more refined, and more enlarged. Variety, therefore, in this branch of divine government, cometh from uniformity, which, as I have often ſaid, is the grand character of his actions.

Let us not paſs over this article lightly, it will guard you againſt the attacks of ſome corrupters of morality. I ſpeak of thoſe, who, wiſhing to recall ſuch times of licence as God permitted, or tolerated, before the goſpel, retrench the preſent morality under pretence that what was once allowable is always allowable. Theſe perſons are never weary of repeating, that ſome favourites of heaven were not ſubject to certain laws; that it does not appear in any part of their hiſtory, either that God cenſured their way of living, or that they repented when they were dying. Hence they infer, that ſome maxims, which are laid down in our uſual ſermons, and treatiſes of morality, originate in the gloom of a caſuiſt, or the caprice of a preacher, and not in the will of God. But remember this ſaying of Jeſus Chriſt, *In the beginning it was not ſo.* The end of religion is to reform and refine man up to the ſtate, in which he was at *the beginning*, that is, in a ſtate of innocence. This work is done by degrees. It began in the firſt age of the church, it will be finiſhed in the laſt. As God made himſelf known to believers before the goſpel only in part, he regulated the requiſite expreſſions of love to himſelf by that degree of knowledge of his perfections, which he had given them; for his attributes are the ground of this love. He hath made

Mat. xix. 8.

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known theſe attributes more clearly under the goſpel, SERM. and he apportions the expreſſions of love accordingly. XIV.

But if this article affords us armour againſt ſome corrupters of morality, it affords us at the ſame time, ſome againſt you, my dear brethren. When we endeavour to animate you to pious actions by the examples of Moſes, David, and many others, who lived under the old diſpenſation, ye alledge, that they were ſaints of the higheſt claſs, and that an attainment of ſuch piety as theirs is impoſſible to you. But recollect our principle. The expreſſions of our love to God muſt be regulated by our knowledge of his perfections. The perfections of God are revealed more clearly to Chriſtians than they were to Jews. *Among theſe, that were born of women, there was not a greater prophet than John the Baptiſt: but he, that is leaſt in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.* The leaſt in love, then, (if I may venture to ſpeak ſo.) the leaſt in love in the kingdom of heaven muſt be greater than John the Baptiſt, as John the Baptiſt was greater than his predeceſſors. As John, therefore, had a purer morality than the prophets and the patriarchs, ſo I ought to have a morality purer than that of the patriarchs and the prophets, yea than John the Baptiſt himſelf. A degree of love to God, then, which would have been accounted flame in them, is lukewarmneſs and ice in me, to whom God hath revealed himſelf as a being ſo amiable, and ſo proper to inflame his intelligent creatures with love to him. A certain attachment to life, and to ſenſible objects, then, which would have been tolerable in them, would be intolerable in me, who, replete as I am with juſt and high ideas of the Deity, ought only to be aſpiring after that ſtate, in which I ſhall be united to God more cloſely, than in this valley of imperfections and miſeries I am allowed to be. Luke vii. 28.

5. Our fifth article is intended to juſtify the various *conditions*, in which it hath pleaſed God to place his church. At one time the church enjoys temporal pomp

SERM. XIV. and felicity, at another it is expoſed to whatever the world can invent of miſery and ignominy. Once the church filled the higheſt poſts in Egypt in the perſons of Joſeph and his family; and afterwards it was loaded with Egyptian fetters in the perſons of this patriarch's deſcendants: One while leading a languiſhing life in a deſart; another time attaining the height of its wiſhes by ſeeing the waters of Jordan divide to give a paſſage, by entering the land of promiſe, by beholding the walls of Jericho fall at the ſound of trumpets, by overſhadowing with an awful fear the minds of Hittites and Perizzites, Jebuſites and Amorites, Canaanites and Amalekites: ſometimes torn from this very country, to which a train of miracles had opened an acceſs, led into captivity by Sennacheribs and Nebuchadnezzars, and leaving Jeruſalem and its temple an heap of ruins; at other times re-eſtabliſhed by Cyrus, and other princes like him, re-aſſembling fugitives who had been ſcattered over the face of the whole earth, rebuilding the walls of Jeruſalem, and re-adorning the temple: now expoſed to the moſt cruel torments, that ſuch as Nero and Domitian, Trajan, Diocleſian, and Decius could invent; then riſing from ruin by the liberal aid of Conſtantine and Theodoſius, and princes, who like them became patrons of the cauſe. Of this article, as of the former, I affirm, uniformity produced variety; the ſame principle, that produced the happy days of the triumphs of the church, gave birth alſo to the calamitous times, which cauſed ſo many tears.

Let us reaſon in regard to the church in general, as we reaſon in regard to each private member of it. Do you think, (I ſpeak now to each individual.) there is a dungeon ſo deep, a chain ſo heavy, a miſery ſo great, a malady ſo deſperate, that God cannot deliver you, were your deliverance ſuitable to the eminence of his perfections? Is there, think you, any condition ſo noble that he cannot elevate you to it, any title ſo deſirable

ſirable that he cannot grace you with it, any treaſure too immenſe for him to beſtow, would the law of proportion, his invariable rule, permit him? Or doſt thou really think, God takes pleaſure in imbittering thy life, in taking away thy children, in tarniſhing thy glory, in ſubverting thine eſtabliſhments, in cruſhing thy houſe, and in precipitating thee from the higheſt human grandeur to the loweſt and moſt mortifying ſtation? Do you think God takes pleaſure in ſeeing a poor wretch ſtretched on a bed of infirmity, and tormented with the gout, or the ſtone? Has he any delight in hearing an agonizing mortal exhale his life in ſighs and groans? Why then doth he at any time reduce us to theſe diſmal extremities? Order requires God, who intends to ſave you, to employ thoſe means, which are moſt likely to conduct you to ſalvation, or, if you refuſe to profit by them, to harden you under them. He wills your ſalvation, and therefore he removes all your obſtacles to ſalvation. He takes away a child, becauſe it is become an idol; he tarniſhes grandeur, becauſe it dazzles and infatuates its poſſeſſor; he ſubverts palaces, becauſe they make men forget graves, their laſt homes; he precipitates men from pinnacles of earthly glory, becauſe they make them reaſons for vanity and inſolence; he involves his creatures in pain and torture, becauſe theſe alone make men feel their diminutiveneſs, their dependence, their nullity. As order requires God, who wills your ſalvation, to employ the moſt proper means to conduct you to it; ſo the ſame order requires him to puniſh contempt of it. It is right, that the blackeſt ingratitude, and the moſt invincible obduracy, ſhould be puniſhed with extreme ills. It is juſt, if God be not glorified in your converſion, he ſhould be in your deſtruction.

Let us reaſon in regard to the church in general, as we do in regard to the individuals, who compoſe it. A change in the condition of the church, doth not argue any change in the attributes of God. Is his *arm ſhort-* Iſai. l. 2.

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SERM. XIV. *ened* ſince he elevated to a throne thoſe illuſtrious potentates, who elevated truth and piety along with themſelves? Is his hand ſhortened ſince he ingulphed Pharaoh in the waves? Since he obliged Nebuchadnezzar to eat graſs like a beaſt? Since he ſent a deſtroying angel to ſlay the army of Sennacherib? Since he ſtruck the ſoul of Belſhazzar with terror, by writing with a miraculous hand on the very walls of his profane feſtal room the ſentence of his condemnation? The ſame eminence of perfections, which engageth him ſometimes to make all concur to the proſperity of his church, engageth him at other times to unite all adverſities againſt it.

II. We have conſidered Jeſus Chriſt in the œconomy of time, now let us conſider him in the œconomy of eternity. We ſhall ſee in this, as in the former, that harmony of perfections, that uniformity of government, which made our apoſtle ſay, *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, and to-day, and for ever.*

The ſame principle, that formed his plan of human government in the œconomy of time, will form a plan altogether different in that of eternity. The ſame principle of proportion, which inclines him to confine our faculties within a narrow circle during this life, will incline him infinitely to extend the ſphere of them in a future ſtate.

The ſame principle, which induces him now to communicate himſelf to us in a ſmall degree, will then induce him to communicate himſelf to us in a far more eminent degree.

The ſame principle, that inclines him now to aſſemble us in material buildings, to cheriſh our devotion by exerciſes ſavouring of the frailty of our ſtate, by the ſinging of pſalms, and by the participation of ſacraments, will incline him hereafter to cheriſh it by means more noble, more ſublime, better ſuited to the dignity of our origin, and to the price of our redemption.

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The ſame principle, which inclines him to involve us now in indigence, miſery, contempt, ſickneſs, and death, will then induce him to free us from all theſe ills, and to introduce us into that happy ſtate, where there will *be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying*, and where *all tears ſhall be wiped away from our eyes*. Proportion requires, that intelligent creatures ſhould be ſome time in a ſtate of probation, and this is the nature of the preſent diſpenſation: but the ſame law of proportion requires alſo, that after intelligent creatures have been ſome time in a ſtate of trial, and have anſwered the end of their being placed in ſuch a ſtate, there ſhould be a ſtate of retribution in an eternal œconomy. The ſame principle, then, that inclines Jeſus Chriſt to adopt the plan of his preſent government, will incline him to adopt a different plan in a future ſtate. There is, therefore, a harmony of perfections, an uniformity of action in all the varieties of the two œconomies. In the œconomy of time, then, as well as in the œconomy of eternity, *Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame.* SERM. XIV. Rev. xxi. 4.

But who can exhauſt this profound ſubject in the time preſcribed for a ſingle ſermon? Our time is nearly elapſed, and I muſt leave you, my brethren, to enlarge on ſuch concluſions as I ſhall juſt mention. God is always the ſame; he purſues one plan of government, ariſing from one invariable principle. By this truth let us regulate our faith, our morality, and our ideas of our future deſtiny.

1. Our *faith*. I will venture to affirm, one chief cauſe of the weakneſs of our faith is our inattention to this harmony of perfections, this uniformity of government in God. We generally conſider the perfections of God and his actions ſeparately, and independent on thoſe infinite relations, which the laſt have to the firſt. Hence, when God diſplays what we call his juſtice, he ſeems to us to ceaſe to be kind, and when he diſplays what we call goodneſs, he ſeems to ſuſpend his rigid juſtice.

SERM. XIV. juſtice. Hence it ſeems to us, his attributes perpetually claſh, ſo that he cannot exerciſe one without doing violence to another. Hence we ſometimes fear God without loving him, and at other times love him without fearing him. Hence we imagine, ſo to ſpeak, many different gods in one deity, and are ignorant whether the good God will favour us with his benefits, or the juſt God will puniſh us with his avenging ſtrokes.

Falſe ideas! more tolerable in people involved in pagan regions of darkneſs and ſhadows of death than in ſuch as live where the light of the goſpel ſhines with ſo much ſplendor. Let us adore only one God, and let us acknowledge in him only one perfection, that is to ſay, a harmony, which reſults from all his perfections. When he diſplays what we call his bounty, let us adore what we call his juſtice; and when he diſplays what we call his juſtice, let us adore what we call his goodneſs. Let us allow, that the exerciſe of one attribute is no way injurious to another. If this idea be impreſſed on our minds, our faith will never be ſhaken, at leaſt it will never be deſtroyed by the viciſſitudes of the world, or by thoſe of the church. Why? Becauſe we ſhall be fully convinced, that the viciſſitudes of both proceed from the ſame cauſe, I mean the immutability of that God, who ſaith
Mal. iii. 6. by the mouth of one of his prophets, *I, the Lord, change not.*

2. But, when I began this diſcourſe, I beſought God, that, by conſidering this ſubject, we might be *changed into the ſame image by his ſpirit*, and this petition I addreſs to him again for you. God hath only one principle of his actions, that is proportion, order, fitneſs of things. Let love of order be the principle of all your actions, my dear brethren, it is the character of a chriſtian, and would to God it were the character of all my hearers. A Chriſtian hath only one principle of action. We often ſee him perform actions,

actions, which ſeem to have no relation; however, they all proceed from the ſame principle. The ſame motive, that carries him to church, engageth him to go to court; he goes into the army on the ſame principle, that induces him to viſit an hoſpital; the motive, which engageth him to perform acts of repentance and mortification, inclines him to make one in a party of pleaſure; becauſe if order, or fitneſs of things, requires him ſometimes to perform mortifying actions, it alſo requires him at other times to take ſome recreation; becauſe as order requires him ſometimes to viſit the ſick, it requires him at other times to defend his country by war; becauſe if order calls him ſometimes to church, it calls him at other times to court; and ſo of the reſt. In ſcripture-ſtyle this diſpoſition of mind is called *walking with God*, *ſetting the Lord always before us*. Glorious character of a Chriſtian, always uniform, and like himſelf! He does nothing, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, but arrange his actions differently, as his circumſtances vary. SERM. XIV. Gen. v. 24. Pſal. xvi. 8.

3. Finally, this idea of God is very proper to regulate that of your future deſtiny. There is, as we have been proving in this diſcourſe, one principle of order, that governs both the œconomies of time and eternity. But, we have elſewhere obſerved, there are two ſorts of order; there is an abſolute and a relative order. Relative order, or fitneſs, conſidered in itſelf, and independently on its relation to another œconomy, is a real diſorder. In virtue of this relative order, we may live happily here a while in the practice of ſin: But, as this kind of order is a violent ſtate, it cannot be of long duration. If, therefore, ye would judge of your eternal deſtiny, your judgment muſt be regulated not by an idea of relative order, which will ſoon end: but by that of real, abſolute order, which muſt have an eternal duration; and in virtue of which vice muſt be puniſhed with miſery, and virtue muſt have a recompenſe of felicity.

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Put theſe queſtions ſometimes to yourſelves, and let each aſk; What will my condition be in a ſtate of abſolute fitneſs? I, who have devoted my whole life to counteract the great deſign of religion, to miſrepreſent its nature, to check its progreſs, to enervate its arguments, to ſubvert its dominion, ſhall I ſhine then as a ſtar of the firſt magnitude, along with them, who have turned many to righteouſneſs, or ſhall I partake the puniſhment of the tempter and his infamous legions? I, who tremble at the thought of giving any thing away, I, who enrich myſelf at the private expence of individuals, and at the public expence of my country, at the expence of my friends, and even of my children, ſhall I ſhare in a future ſtate the felicity of that generous ſociety, which breathes benevolence only, and which conſiders the happineſs of others as its own; of that ſociety, which is happy in the perſons of all, who participate their felicity: or ſhall I ſhare the miſery of thoſe infernal ſocieties, which ſeek pleaſure in the miſeries of others, and ſo become mutually ſelf-tormentors?

Do we wiſh for a full aſſurance of a claim to eternal happineſs? Let us then by our conduct form an inſeparable relation between our eternal felicity and the invariable perfections of that God, who changeth not; let us ſpare no pains to arrive at that happy ſtate; let us addreſs to God our moſt fervent prayers to engage him to bleſs the efforts, which we make to enjoy it; and, after we have ſeriouſly engaged in this great work, let us fear nothing. The ſame principle, which induced God to reſtore Iſaac to Abraham, to raiſe, as it were, that dear child by a kind of reſurrection from his father's knife; the ſame principle, that engaged him to elevate David from the condition of a ſimple ſhepherd to the rank of a king; let us ſay more, the ſame principle, which engaged him to open the gates of heaven to *the author and finiſher of our faith*, after the conſummation of the work, for which

Heb. xii. 2.

which he came; the ſame principle will incline him to unfold the gates of heaven to us, when we ſhall have finiſhed the work, for which we were born. Our felicity will be founded on the rock of ages; it will be incorporated with the eſſence of an unchangeable God; we ſhall ſtand faſt in perilous times, and, when the world, the whole world tumbles into ruins, we ſhall exclaim with the higheſt joy, *My God! thou didſt lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They periſh: but thou ſhalt endure. They all ſhall wax old like a garment: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall have no end. The children of thy ſervants ſhall continue, and their ſeed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee.* Pſal. cii. 24, &c. God grant this may be our happy lot! To him be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

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THE END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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